

The Guardian Weekly

The 1% polluter elite

PLUS
**The many
resets of
Rishi Sunak**

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**How royal
dramas
went rogue**

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Inside the gulf between the
world's gas-guzzling rich and
heat-vulnerable poor
The great carbon divide

SPECIAL REPORT 10





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**The
GuardianWeekly**



Carbon inequality revealed, Kyiv's darkening days and rogue royal dramas



On the cover The main finding of Oxfam's report is that the richest 1% of the population produced as much carbon pollution in one year as the 5 billion people who make up the poorest two-thirds. As Jonathan Watts writes: "Why is carbon inequality widening? What drives the lifestyle ... of the rich? How is carbon inequality linked with other systemic injustices? And what can be done about it?"

Illustration: Guardian Design



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Inside

With the Cop28 climate conference due to open next week in Dubai, it seemed a good moment to reflect on who exactly is responsible for the lion's share of carbon pollution as a major Oxfam report exposes how the world's richest 1% cause more carbon emissions than the poorest 66% combined. Global environment editor Jonathan Watts explains why uncovering the disparity is key to solving the crisis, while environment correspondent Sandra Laville reveals how just 12 super-rich individuals outpollute 2.1m homes annually.

The big story *Page 10 →*

Winter has descended in Ukraine and so too has a sense of gloom upon Kyiv. Shaun Walker reports on how exhaustion from two years of war and a realisation that a swift victory may no longer be achievable have subtly changed the national mood.

Spotlight *Page 22 →*

This edition went to press before the result of the Netherlands election was known - but for context, don't miss Paul Tullis's long read on Dutch farmers' mass protests over nitrogen emissions and what it could all portend for other developed nations.

Nitrogen wars *Page 34 →*

As the final season of The Crown hits TV screens, complete with ghostly appearances from Princess Diana (and mostly withering reviews), culture writer Mark Lawson considers other regal stage and screen dramatisations, featuring varying degrees of historical accuracy, and asks if the Netflix show has permanently broken the mould for royal drama.

The royal treatment *Page 51 →*

For many years, album covers increasingly felt like symbols of a lost era. But as vinyl sales continue to bounce back, Dorian Lynskey delves into the identities of people whose images appeared on memorable record sleeve artwork.

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Global report

Headlines from the last seven days

1 CLIMATE CRISIS

'Hellish' 3C climate heating, UN warns ahead of Cop28

The world is on track for a "hellish" 3C of global heating, the UN has warned before the crucial Cop28 climate summit that begins on 28 November in the United Arab Emirates. The report found that today's carbon-cutting policies are so inadequate that 3C of heating would be reached this century.

Temperature records have already been obliterated in 2023 and intensifying heatwaves, floods and droughts have taken lives and hit livelihoods across the globe, in response to a temperature rise of just 1.4C to date.

The UN Environment Programme report said that implementing future policies already promised by countries would shave 0.1C off the 3C limit. Putting in place emissions cuts pledged by developing countries on condition of receiving financial and technical support would cut the temperature rise to 2.5C, still a catastrophic scenario.

To get on track for the internationally agreed target of 1.5C, 22bn tonnes of CO₂ must be cut from the currently projected total in 2030, the report said - that is 42% of global emissions.

The big story [Page 10 →](#)



2 ARGENTINA



Far-right Javier Milei calls his poll victory a 'miracle'

Javier Milei, a volatile far-right libertarian who has vowed to "exterminate" inflation and take a chainsaw to the state, was elected president, catapulting South America's second largest economy into an unpredictable and potentially turbulent future.

With more than 99% of votes counted, the Mick Jagger-impersonating TV celebrity-turned-politician, often compared to Donald Trump, had secured 55.69% of the vote compared with 44.3% for his rival, the centre-left finance minister Sergio Massa.

"Today the reconstruction of Argentina begins. Today is a historic night for Argentina," Milei told supporters at his Buenos Aires campaign headquarters, calling his victory a "miracle".

Spotlight [Page 33 →](#)

4 TECHNOLOGY

OpenAI staff threaten to quit if Altman not reinstated

Turmoil engulfed the company behind ChatGPT after OpenAI staff threatened to quit en masse unless the board overseeing the business reinstates its ousted chief executive, Sam Altman, and steps down.

In an open letter, nearly all OpenAI employees demanded the resignation of the board and said they may walk out if Altman is not brought back.

Altman was fired last Friday in a move that shocked Silicon Valley, riled the company's employees and put rival tech companies on alert for a talent exodus.

Monday's letter to OpenAI's four remaining board directors said: "Your actions have made it obvious that you are incapable of overseeing OpenAI. We are unable to work for or with people that lack competence, judgment and care for our mission and employees." The board's members have yet to comment publicly.

The letter added that the signatories could join Altman and OpenAI's former president Greg Brockman at Microsoft after the tech company hired the duo.

Spotlight [Page 32 →](#)

3 UNITED STATES

Sean 'Diddy' Combs and singer Cassie settle suit

Sean "Diddy" Combs and singer Cassie said they had settled a lawsuit containing allegations of beatings and abuse by the music producer.

Combs, a hip-hop icon and the founder of Bad Boy Records, was accused of rape and abuse in a major lawsuit filed by Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, that alleges he used his powerful network to keep her trapped in a violent relationship with him.

The settlement was announced a day after the lawsuit was filed, but no terms of the agreement were disclosed.

5 UNITED STATES

Biden and Xi ease tensions at Apec economic summit

Pacific Rim leaders showed divisions over the wars in Ukraine and Gaza after a two-day summit of the Apec forum hosted by Joe Biden in San Francisco, while pledging support for reform of the World Trade Organization.

Days of meetings involving Apec ministers and leaders from the 21 economies that make up the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum - among them Russia, China, the US and Australia - were dominated by a summit last Wednesday between Biden and China's Xi Jinping aimed at cooling tensions between the world's two largest economies.

GW

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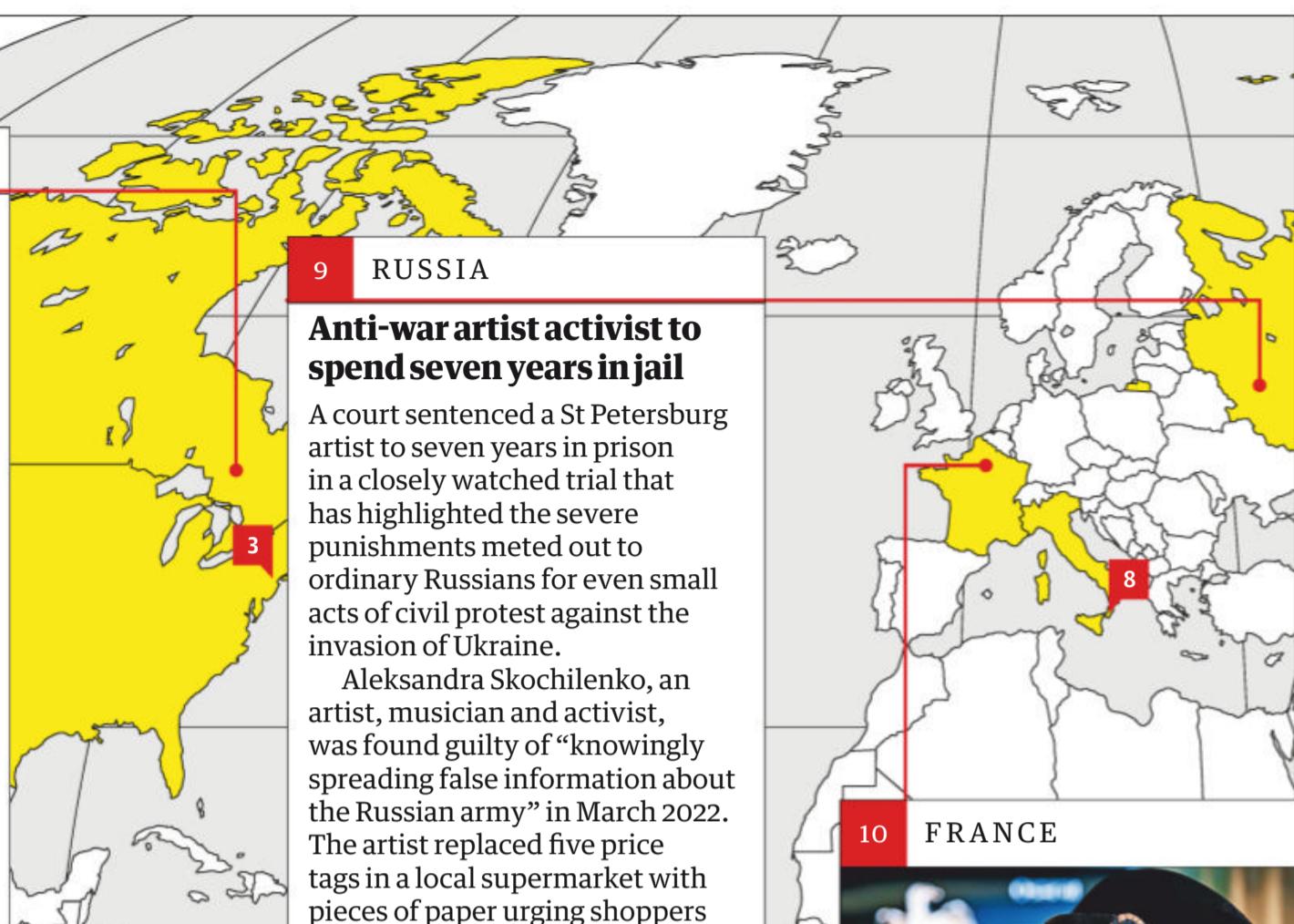
6 CANADA

Feud reopened after claims of 'unwitting' espionage

A simmering diplomatic feud prompted by China's detention of two Canadian citizens has been reopened after one of the men held claimed he was arrested for unknowingly passing intelligence to Canada and its allies.

The *Globe and Mail* reported Michael Spavor is seeking a multi-million dollar settlement from Canada's federal government, alleging he "unwittingly" provided intelligence on North Korea to fellow Canadian Michael Kovrig, who shared it with Canada and Five Eyes allies the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The two men were arrested in 2018 shortly after Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was detained in Canada over possible violations of sanctions on Iran.



9 RUSSIA

Anti-war artist activist to spend seven years in jail

A court sentenced a St Petersburg artist to seven years in prison in a closely watched trial that has highlighted the severe punishments meted out to ordinary Russians for even small acts of civil protest against the invasion of Ukraine.

Aleksandra Skochilenko, an artist, musician and activist, was found guilty of "knowingly spreading false information about the Russian army" in March 2022. The artist replaced five price tags in a local supermarket with pieces of paper urging shoppers to stop the war, resist propaganda on television and referencing a bombing in Mariupol.

Spotlight Page 22 →

7 BRAZIL

**Taylor Swift postpones concert after fan's death**

Taylor Swift postponed a concert in Rio de Janeiro last Saturday after a fan died before the start of her gig in the same city the previous night. Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S Paulo* reported that the fan collapsed at the show and had a cardiac arrest. Concertgoers reported sweltering conditions at the venue, the Estadio Olímpico Nilton Santos.

Much of Brazil saw record-breaking temperatures last week and the daytime high in Rio last Friday was 39.1C. Earlier, Swift, 33, said she was "devastated" at the news of the fan's death.

8 ITALY

Mafia 'maxi trial' convicts more than 200 people

More than 200 people were convicted and sentenced for crimes including criminal association, extortion and bribery in what has been described as Italy's largest mafia trial in three decades.

The verdicts marked the end of a three-year "maxi trial" held in a specially built high-security courtroom in the southern Calabria region built specifically to hold up to 350 defendants, accommodate 400 lawyers and hear from the 900 witnesses providing testimony against a network of members belonging to the notorious 'Ndrangheta, which enjoys a near-monopoly on the European cocaine trade.

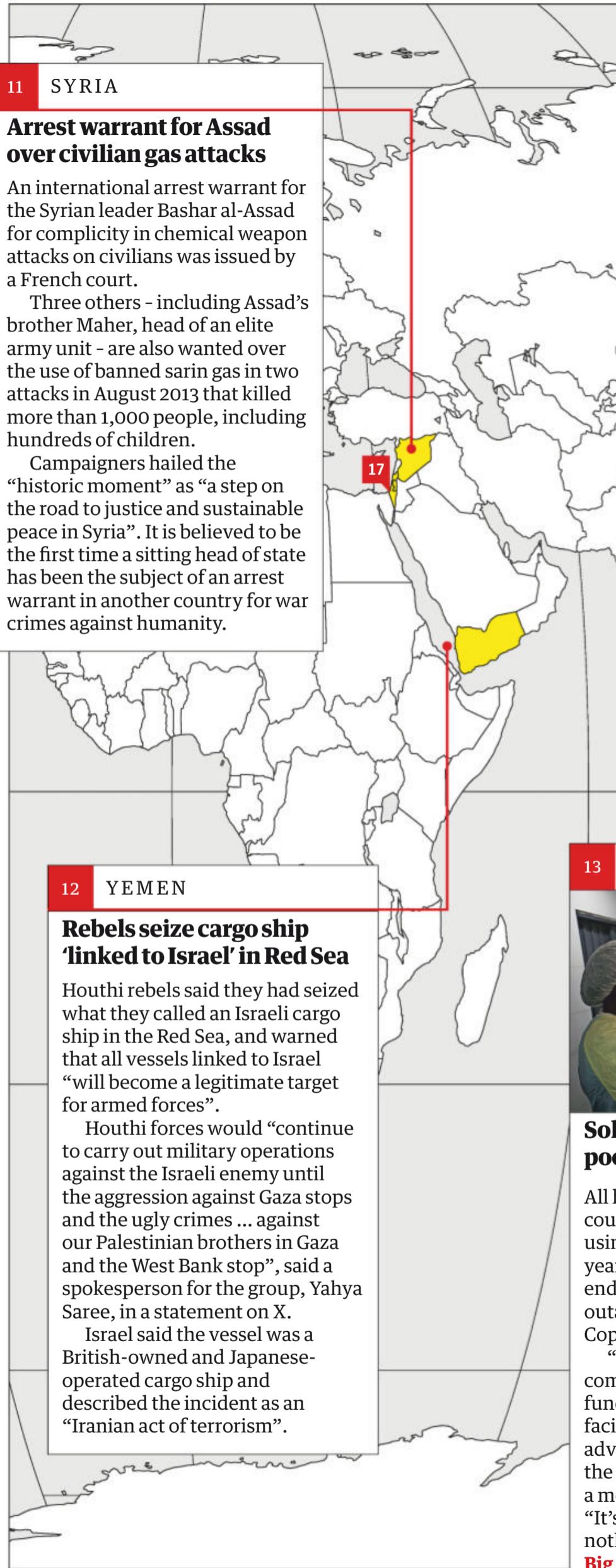
10 FRANCE

**Hat worn by Napoleon gets topical boost at auction sale**

A two-cornered hat worn by Napoleon Bonaparte during his reign as French emperor has fetched a record €1.93m (\$2.11m) at an auction in Paris. The black bicorne beaver felt hat is one of 20 remaining out of 120 the French military commander is believed to have owned in his lifetime. Napoleon wore his hats sideways to ensure he was distinguishable on the battlefield - and thus created one of the most recognisable brands in history.

The sale price is thought to have been inflated by the hype surrounding Ridley Scott's Napoleon biopic.

Culture page 56 →



11 SYRIA

Arrest warrant for Assad over civilian gas attacks

An international arrest warrant for the Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad for complicity in chemical weapon attacks on civilians was issued by a French court.

Three others - including Assad's brother Maher, head of an elite army unit - are also wanted over the use of banned sarin gas in two attacks in August 2013 that killed more than 1,000 people, including hundreds of children.

Campaigners hailed the "historic moment" as "a step on the road to justice and sustainable peace in Syria". It is believed to be the first time a sitting head of state has been the subject of an arrest warrant in another country for war crimes against humanity.

12 YEMEN

Rebels seize cargo ship 'linked to Israel' in Red Sea

Houthi rebels said they had seized what they called an Israeli cargo ship in the Red Sea, and warned that all vessels linked to Israel "will become a legitimate target for armed forces".

Houthi forces would "continue to carry out military operations against the Israeli enemy until the aggression against Gaza stops and the ugly crimes ... against our Palestinian brothers in Gaza and the West Bank stop", said a spokesperson for the group, Yahya Saree, in a statement on X.

Israel said the vessel was a British-owned and Japanese-operated cargo ship and described the incident as an "Iranian act of terrorism".

14 TAIWAN

Talks over presidential candidate reach stalemate

A potential joint ticket for the presidency by the two main opposition parties was in disarray after the smaller of the two said no consensus had been reached to make that decision.

After weeks of talks, the Kuomintang and the smaller Taiwan People's party (TPP) initially agreed to look at which party's candidate would run as president and which as vice-president but the TPP said there was "considerable controversy" in the statistical method being used.

The deadline for candidates to register for the January vote is 24 November.

13 HEALTH



Solar energy could power poorer nations' healthcare

All healthcare facilities in poorer countries could be electrified using solar energy within five years for less than \$5bn, putting an end to the risk of life from power outages, experts will argue at Cop28 this month.

"I would like the international community to commit to ... funding to electrify all healthcare facilities," said Salvatore Vinci, an adviser on sustainable energy at the World Health Organization and a member of its Cop28 delegation. "It's a low-hanging fruit. There is nothing stopping us," he said.

Big story Page 10 →

Global report

15 SPORT



Record-breaking Australia win cricket World Cup

Australia won cricket's one-day World Cup for a record-breaking sixth time, beating India in its home tournament with a six-wicket victory in a low-scoring final in Ahmedabad last Sunday.

A heavily partisan crowd inside the 132,000-capacity Narendra Modi Stadium was silenced as the Australia batsman Travis Head, who hit 137 from 120 balls, combined with Marnus Labuschagne (58 not out) in a 192-run partnership to chase down the winning target of 241.

It capped a stellar year for Australia's men's team, who won the World Test Championship, also against India, and retained the Ashes in England.

"We'll remember this year for a long, long time," captain Pat Cummins said afterwards.

16 JAPAN

Actor convicted over assisting parents' suicide

One of the country's best-known kabuki actors was given a suspended prison sentence for helping his parents die in an apparent suicide pact.

Ennosuke Ichikawa, a fourth-generation member of a kabuki family, was arrested in June after his mother and father were found dead at the family's home in Tokyo in May. According media reports, Ichikawa, his mother, Nobuko, 75, and his 76-year-old father, Hiroyuki, all took pills on 17 May. His parents died but Ichikawa survived. Ichikawa was given a three-year prison sentence, suspended for five years.

17 ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Hamas close to reaching a truce, says leader

Ismail Haniyeh, the most senior political leader of Hamas, on Tuesday said a truce agreement with Israel was close, raising hopes of both a pause in the Israeli offensive in Gaza and the release of at least some of the hostages the militant organisation is holding. The group has delivered its response to Qatari mediators.

Senior US and Israeli officials, as well as the Qatari prime minister, all suggested at the start of this week that an agreement was near, although observers have cautioned that public statements during such negotiations are often misleading and any potential deal could easily collapse. Analysts also say any deal agreed by Hamas's political leadership overseas would have to be acceptable to leaders in Gaza.

Negotiators have been working to secure a deal to allow the release of about 240 mostly Israeli hostages who were seized on 7 October when Hamas launched attacks into Israel. Qatar, where Hamas has a political office and where Haniyeh is based, has been mediating.

Spotlight Page 15 →

19 PHILIPPINES

Earthquake kills eight and causes mall ceiling collapse

The death toll from a strong earthquake off the southern Philippines rose to eight last weekend.

The 6.7-magnitude quake that struck the Mindanao region mid-afternoon last Friday caused part of a shopping mall ceiling to collapse, triggered power cuts and sent people fleeing into the streets.

Falling debris from the mall in General Santos City crushed a woman to death, while 19 other people were treated for shock, city police captain Ari Noel Cardos said.

Police earlier reported the death of a couple pinned under a collapsing concrete wall in General Santos. Others were killed in Sarangani, South Cotabato and Davao Occidental provinces.



DEATHS



Rosalynn Carter
Wife of Jimmy Carter and former first lady. She died on 19 November, aged 96.

AS Byatt

Acclaimed author of novels including the Booker prize-winning Possession and The Children's Book. She died on 16 November, aged 87.

Joss Ackland

British actor who starred in films such as White Mischief and the TV version of Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. He died on 19 November, aged 95.

George Brown

Kool and the Gang drummer and co-founder, known for co-writing hits such as Ladies' Night and Celebration. He died on 16 November, aged 74.

Maggie Rae

Lawyer who represented Diana, Princess of Wales in her divorce proceedings from the then Prince of Wales. She died on 7 November, aged 74.

18 PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Refugees face eviction over unpaid humanitarian bills

Refugees and asylum seekers held by Australia in Papua New Guinea for a decade were due to be evicted this week - and have their groceries, medical and security services cut - because the bills for their accommodation, healthcare and food have not been paid for more than a year.

Many of the 64 men have been without electricity, and some without food, for more than two weeks. The Australian-funded humanitarian programme reportedly owes more than A\$50m (\$33m) to around a dozen PNG companies which were providing the services.

20 NEW ZEALAND

Poll reveals voters' doubts over incoming coalition

A vote for new leadership has not translated into widespread confidence that the incoming three-party government will work constructively together, while a growing number of people feel unsure as to whether the country is on the right track, a new Guardian Essential New Zealand poll has found.

One month on from the election, the country remains in the dark over what shape the government will take as coalition talks drag on. In the poll, 37% of respondents said they were not confident the three parties could work effectively together.

SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT



SPACE

SpaceX's Starship explodes shortly after reaching space

SpaceX's uncrewed Starship spacecraft, developed to carry astronauts to the moon and beyond, reached space for the first time last Saturday but was presumed to have failed minutes later.

It was Starship's second test after its first attempt to reach space ended in an explosion in April. The two-stage rocket ship blasted off from the Elon Musk-owned company's Starbase launch site in Texas.

The two stages of the spacecraft successfully separated about two and a half minutes into the flight, but shortly afterwards, SpaceX announced it could not find a signal from the second stage. SpaceX's second flight is an improvement on its first test launch, when both stages exploded four minutes into its flight.

MEDICINE

Gene therapy given approval for two blood disorders

Britain's drugs regulator has approved a groundbreaking treatment for two painful and debilitating lifelong blood disorders, which works by "editing" the gene that causes them.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has given the green light for Casgevy to be used to treat sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia. It is the first medicine licensed anywhere that

uses the "genetic scissors", known as CRISPR. Casgevy's developers hope the treatment could banish the pain, infections and anaemia sickle cell disease brings and the severe anaemia experienced by those with beta thalassemia.

POLLUTION

Microplastics found in clouds could alter the weather

Air, water, soil, food and even blood - microplastics have found their way virtually everywhere on Earth, and now that list includes clouds. Bits of plastic particles were recently discovered above eastern China, with new research showing that these microplastics could influence cloud formation and the weather.

Scientists from Shandong University collected cloud water atop Mount Tai, finding microplastics in 24 out of 28 samples. They include particles commonly found in synthetic fibres, clothing, textiles, packaging and face masks.

"This finding provides significant evidence of the presence of abundant MPs [microplastics] in clouds," the researchers stated in the paper published in Environmental Science and Technology Letters.

PSYCHOLOGY

Magicians 'less likely to face mental health challenges'

Magicians may be less prone to mental health difficulties than other creatives and the general population, a study, led by Aberystwyth University's psychology department, suggests. The research, published in the journal BJPsych Open, measured psychopathological traits of almost 200 magicians and compared the results with data from other artistic groups and the general population.

It concluded that magicians scored significantly lower than other types of creatives and "normal" people and found magicians were less likely to have unusual experiences such as hallucinations or cognitive disorganisation.

Global report
United Kingdom

CONSERVATIVES

PM considers emergency bill after Rwanda ruling

Rishi Sunak is considering blocking a key human rights law to help force through plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda amid growing pressure from rightwing Conservative MPs.

No 10 has discussed the possibility of "disapplying" the Human Rights Act to an emergency bill in an effort to minimise legal challenges against the prime minister's key immigration policy.

The prime minister is under intense pressure from the Conservative right to get the scheme working as part of his pledge to "stop the boats" amid the Channel refugee crisis. Right-leaning MPs are demanding that a flight takes off for Kigali before the next general election, which is expected to take place before the end of 2024. Ministers are aware such a proposal could face rebellions in the Commons and the Lords, which could vote down the proposals.

It follows a ruling by the UK's highest court last week that Sunak's flagship policy is unlawful because of the possibility of "refoulement" - that refugees are at risk of being sent back to their country of origin. This is prohibited by international laws, including the European convention on human rights, the UN refugee convention and the UN convention against torture, which have been given effect in domestic law by the Human Rights Act.

Hours after the court ruling, Sunak said he would upgrade the agreement with the Rwandan government to a treaty and launch an emergency bill within weeks.

Spotlight Page 18 →



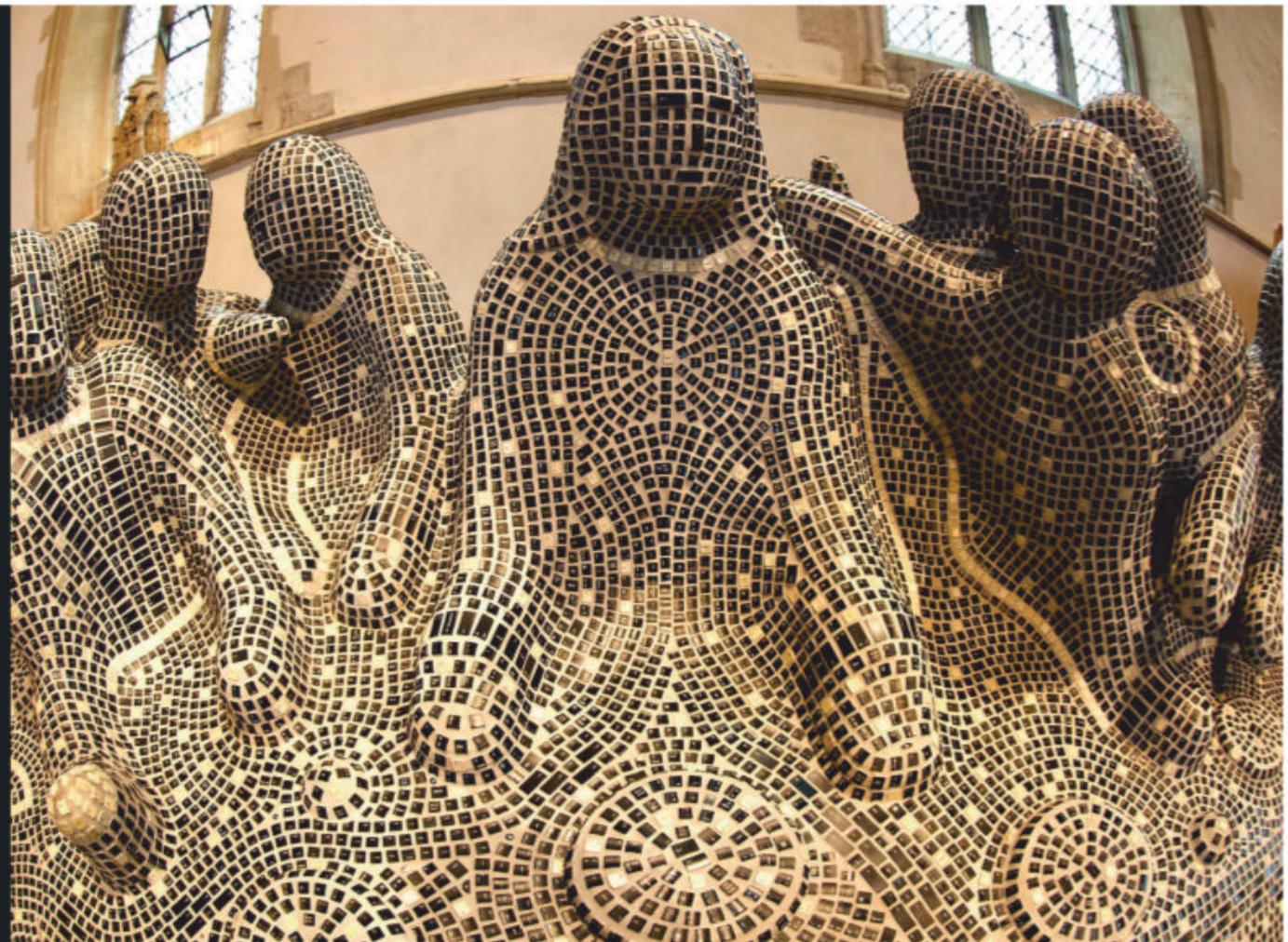
120

Age in millions of years of footprints found on a south Australian shoreline, which scientists say are the earliest evidence of birds in the southern hemisphere

Eyewitness**Alt-Jesus**

A sculptural recreation of Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper using 50,000 old keyboard keys is seen on display at Dorchester Abbey in Dorset. In addition to creating a mosiac effect, the keys also make up verses from the Bible as well as single words for visitors to discover. The sculpture, which took Peter Barnes five years to complete, will be on display at the abbey for the next six months.

GEOFFREY SWAINE/SHUTTERSTOCK

**LABOUR****Starmer faces more revolt if Gaza policy does not change**

Keir Starmer faces more resignations from Labour's frontbench if he does not shift his policy on Gaza, amid growing anger in the party over how he has handled a vote on the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The Labour leader suffered the biggest rebellion of his tenure last Wednesday as 10 frontbenchers resigned or were sacked from his team after voting for a Scottish National party motion that called for a ceasefire.

Sources say several of those who remained loyal and kept their jobs are nonetheless angry about how the issue has been managed, and would be willing to quit if Starmer does not push the government to take a tougher line on Israeli military action in the region.

One said: "We've been warning for weeks that the party was getting its messaging wrong on Gaza. Many of us stayed in the end, not to keep our jobs but to continue to push for change from the inside."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Apostrophe catastrophe on street sign reaches full stop**

After a 12-month battle, an apostrophe has been added back in to a street sign for St Mary's Terrace, in Twyford, Hampshire, to the delight not only of villagers but to punctuation enthusiasts across the UK. The controversy began when a new road sign appeared minus the apostrophe. Complaints led to intricate discussions at the local council with references to how the author Jane Austen used punctuation.

The Apostrophe Protection Society (mission: "to preserve the correct use of this important, though much misused, item of punctuation") welcomed the decision.

**HOUSING****Survey reveals huge rise in unlicensed bedsits**

Nearly 160,000 people are living in hidden, often overcrowded and sometimes dangerous bedsit-style accommodation across England, analysis has found. Intelligence compiled by councils suggests there are almost 32,000 unlicensed large houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). These are believed to be home to at least 159,340 tenants, who are often drawn by cheaper rents amid the cost of living crisis.

Conditions can be dire, with examples of more than 10 people sharing a bathroom, squalid conditions or little fire protection.

Landlords have doubled their borrowing to invest in HMOs since 2018. Based on local authority statistics submitted to the government between 2011 and 2022, the estimated number of larger hidden bedsits - those that accommodate more than five unrelated people sharing bathrooms and kitchens - has increased by 46% in the past 10 years in England.



2.1m

Price in pounds (\$2.6m) paid for a bottle of Macallan 1926 whisky at Sotheby's in London, making it the most expensive bottle of spirit or wine ever sold at auction

The big story

The great carbon divide

On the eve of the Cop28 climate conference in Dubai, a major new report reveals the deep imbalance between the carbon emissions of the world's richest and poorest people - and why recognising who is most to blame is an important step towards identifying possible solutions

The oil barons



CLIMATE CRISIS

By Jonathan Watts

The climate chasm between the world's carbon-guzzling rich and the heat-vulnerable poor forms a symbolic shape when plotted on a graph. Climate-heating greenhouse gas emissions are so heavily concentrated among a rich minority that the image resembles one of those old-fashioned broad-bowled, saucer-shaped glasses beloved of the gilded age: a champagne coupe.

At the top is the wide, flat, shallow bowl of the richest 10% of humanity, whose carbon appetite - through personal consumption, investment portfolios, and share of government subsidies and infrastructure benefits - accounts for about 50% of all emissions.

Just below is the epicure, that narrowing joint of the glass where the dregs collect. This is made up of the middle 40%, whose carbon habit is roughly proportionate to its number but still double the average carbon budget that everyone would need to stick to if the world is to have any chance of avoiding more dangerous levels of climate breakdown.

Going further down is the long, slim stem comprising the remaining 50% of the world's population, whose carbon use tapers away along with incomes. At the bottom are the hundreds of millions who live in extreme poverty and barely register in terms of greenhouse gases.

The champagne coupe is a fitting image for the great carbon divide that we are living through. The last time wealth inequality was as pronounced as it is now was during that *belle époque* of the 1920s. Then, it was bad enough as a cause of social misery and international instability. Today, it is arguably much worse because the gulf between the haves and have-nots extends to their carbon emissions, which heightens suffering from the climate crisis and impedes efforts to find a solution.

This year, the extremes have been more apparent than ever. Oil firms have raked in trillions of dollars in profits that they plan to use to expand production of climate-destabilising fossil fuels, despite warnings from the International Energy Agency that this will make it impossible to keep global heating to within 1.5C.

Meanwhile, 2023 is on track to be the hottest year on record, and the victims of global heating and extreme weather

have been legion. From the dozens of poor Central American migrants who died from heatstroke trying to cross the desert into the wealthy US, to the 18 north Africans, including two children, who burned to death as they attempted to pass through Greek forests engulfed by flames; from the thousands of Hebei villagers who lost their homes when the Chinese government diverted flood waters from wealthy Beijing, to the Mexican fishing community of El Bosque that is being eroded due to more frequent storms battering its coastline. Speaking from an emergency refuge, Guadalupe Cobos Pacheco, a resident of El Bosque, said she felt resentment towards the oil companies that operated platforms within sight of her disappearing village. "We are living in a total climate breakdown. It is a constant worry ... we don't know what to do," she said. "All this oil exploitation has consequences yet it is us who are paying."

These are just a few of the many individual stories of climate breakdown. Together, they have the potential to fundamentally destabilise life for all of us. Climate justice is expected to be high on the agenda of the UN Cop28 climate summit in Dubai starting next week. In principle, rich nations have agreed on a "loss and damage fund" to help poor countries cope with the ever more severe fallout from the crisis. But this is not the only form of inequality. Income gaps - and therefore carbon gaps - may have narrowed between countries but they have widened within them. Responsibility for the ongoing climate crisis is becoming more concentrated, while its impacts are spreading.

Why is carbon inequality widening? What drives the lifestyle and invest-

ment choices of the rich? How is carbon inequality linked with other systemic injustices? And what can be done about it? For the past six months, the Guardian's team of specialist environment and climate justice reporters have had an exclusive inside track on research that quantifies global carbon inequality, carried out by Oxfam, the Stockholm Environment Institute and other experts.

The main finding of Oxfam's report: that the richest 1% of the population produced as much carbon pollution in one year as the 5 billion people who make up the poorest two-thirds. This is not just another exercise in comparing individual carbon usage - the cunning ruse that was promoted by the oil firm BP almost 20 years ago. Concerned about the damage being done to its corporate reputation by the climate crisis, BP hired a public relations firm to bolster its image. One of the most effective strategies that emerged was the launch in 2004 of a carbon footprint calculator, which encouraged consumers to bear responsibility for their greenhouse gas emissions, instead of the producers who were making trillions from pumping oil and gas out of the ground, advertising to boost sales, and lobbying to delay emissions reductions. This also became the basis for the dubious accounting trick of carbon offsets, which has been an excuse for big polluters to continue polluting. To avoid this trap, the climate movement has understandably tended to downplay individual footprints and to focus instead on the importance of political and economic reforms.

The Guardian has previously shone a spotlight on the top 20 fossil fuel firms behind a third of all emissions. We have also analysed the total emissions of countries since 1850 to reveal the nations with the greatest historical responsibility for the climate emergency. But inequality between people has increasingly become a structural impediment to climate justice and climate action. We humans are not equally to blame for rising temperatures, more destructive storms, longer droughts and fiercer forest fires. Recognising that is an important step in identifying the cause of the problem, possible solutions and fair compensation for those affected.

Closer scrutiny of billionaires is an essential first step. This economic elite has grown richer faster than any other demographic in recent

PLUS

Dirty dozen
The tycoons
who
outpollute
2.1m homes

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Clear divide
Inequality is
visible from
the Cop28
gates

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'We are living in a total climate breakdown. Oil exploitation has consequences yet it is us who are paying'

decades and, though they number just 2,600, their combined wealth is greater than all but two countries – the US and China – and their climate impact is enormous.

Lower down the income scale, the inequalities are still jarring. The top 10%, who are paid at least \$40,000, are responsible for 50% of emissions. They may feel less culpable than the super-rich but there are many more of them, so their combined impact is considerable.

“We are not equally to blame for these emissions, nor for the damage they cause,” the climate activist Greta Thunberg writes in the preface to Oxfam’s report. “Either we safeguard living conditions for all future generations or we let a few very rich people maintain their destructive lifestyles and preserve an economic system geared towards short-term economic growth and shareholder profit.”

Emily Ghosh, of the Stockholm Environment Institute, said the data showed the need for a different approach. “With the climate problem, we can’t ignore what people in the top 1% and 10% are doing. They have a global impact,” she said. “We need to address this because it has gone unchallenged for too long. We need to look more closely to see how investments lock us into certain patterns of consumption, and who makes those decisions. There needs to be a strong shift in power.”

Climate anxiety means different

10%

The richest 1% of humanity is responsible for more carbon emissions than the poorest 66%, the report says

things to different income groups. At the bottom, it means fear of heat and floods. At the top, it means fear of increasingly desperate people. Billionaires often live in protective bubbles maintained at a considerable cost in dollars and emissions. Instead of making every effort to reduce emissions, the rich increase their carbon footprint by putting more distance between themselves and the masses.

Oxfam’s report reveals that the senior politicians who will dominate at Cop28 are also in the top 1% of income earners. Corporate CEOs, whose lobbyists flock to Cop summits, are often wealthier and more heavily invested in carbon assets. Boardroom share options and bonus structures have created an incentive for oil company executives to resist climate action. Instead, they have successfully pushed for expansion of fossil fuel production.

Dario Kenner, the author of Carbon Inequality, has identified what he calls a “polluter elite”: anyone with a net worth over \$1m who reinforces the use of fossil fuel technologies through their high carbon consumption, investments in polluting companies and, most importantly, political influence. “The polluter elite have blocked an alternative history where the destruction of extreme weather events and air pollution could have been reduced,” he told the Guardian.

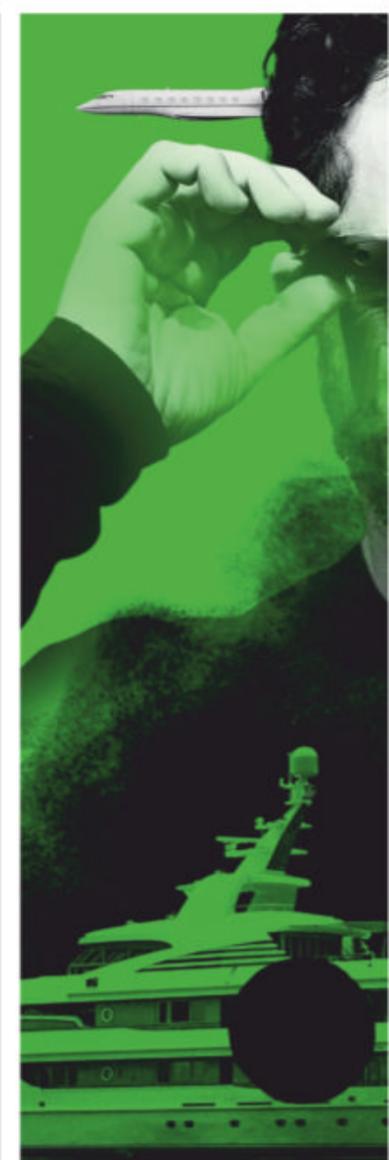
The climate negotiating process has failed to keep pace with the growing power of the super-rich. Thirty-one years ago, when the world first came together to tackle climate and biodiversity problems at the Rio de Janeiro Earth summit, there was optimism for a solution on behalf of billions of humans and the other forms of life on Earth. Since then, the opposite has happened. Governments remain deeply divided, 60% more emissions are being pumped into the atmosphere and more money, carbon and power is concentrated in ever fewer hands.

The solution to all this is complex but also very simple. Many believe the key lies in politicians wresting back control of the climate issue with strong legislation and policy. Oxfam is calling for a wealth tax, and a windfall tax on corporations based on the “polluter pays” principle, placing the highest burden on those most responsible and most able to pay.

“We need a political discourse that is class conscious, that recognises that the rich and capitalism are the major drivers of the climate crisis,” said Jason Hickel, an economic anthropologist at the London School of Economics and the author of *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and its Solutions*. “This is about bringing production – and provisioning systems and energy systems – under democratic control.”

With the climate crisis entering a deadlier phase, and millions of lives and livelihoods at stake, such arguments are likely to grow louder. Scientists have demonstrated that every fraction of a degree is worth fighting for. Equality campaigners argue that every percentile of income gap that can be reduced is worth fighting for. Both will decide how many fall into the rapidly widening climate gulf.●

JONATHAN WATTS IS THE GUARDIAN’S GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT EDITOR
Additional reporting by Damien Gayle and Fiona Harvey



THE SUPER-RICH

By Sandra Laville

▲ Sergey Brin, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Roman Abramovich are among the 12 billionaires in the analysis

Measuring coupe

How a champagne glass illustrates the climate chasm

Richest 10%

Middle 40%

Poorest 50%

Share of CO₂ emissions in 2019, by income group and population.
Source: Climate Equality: A planet for the 99%, Oxfam. Note: figures do not add to 100% due to rounding

GUARDIAN GRAPHICS; NGÂN BÙI



Filthy rich Twelve billionaires' climate emissions outpollute 2.1m homes

Twelve of the world's wealthiest billionaires produce more greenhouse gas emissions from their yachts, private jets, mansions and financial investments than the annual energy emissions of more than 2m homes, research shared exclusively with the Guardian reveals.

The tycoons include the Amazon boss, Jeff Bezos, the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, the tech billionaires Bill Gates, Larry Page and Michael Dell, the inventor and social media company owner Elon Musk and the Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim.

Analysis by Oxfam and US researchers of their luxury purchases, and the impact of their financial investments and shareholdings, reveals they

account for almost 17m tonnes of CO₂ and equivalent greenhouse gas emissions annually. This is the same as the CO₂ and equivalent emissions from powering 2.1m homes or the emissions from 4.6 coal-fired power plants over a year, according to conversion data from the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The true scale of the investment emissions of these individuals is not generally reported. Oxfam analysts working with two US academics, Beatriz Barros and Richard Wilk, used publicly available data to calculate the greenhouse gas impacts.

Oxfam International's inequality policy adviser, Alex Maitland, said: "Through the corporations they own, billionaires emit a million times more carbon than the average person.

"They tend to favour investments in heavily polluting industries, like fossil fuels. The world's poorest communities

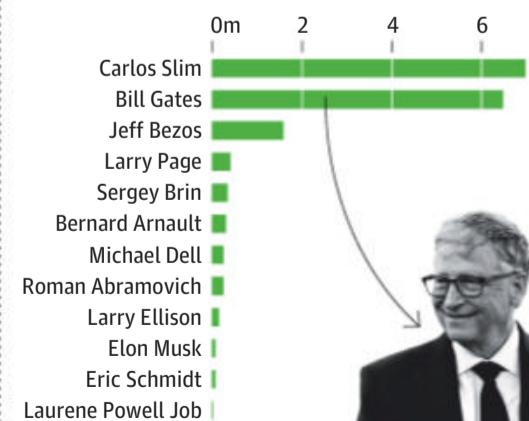
- those who have done the least to cause climate change, those least able to respond and recover - are the ones suffering the worst consequences."

The lifestyle emissions were estimated by examining the carbon footprint of the billionaires'

Dirty dollars

Twelve billionaires are responsible for nearly 17m tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually

Emissions from dwellings, transport, yachts and investments, tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, millions



Source: Beatriz Barros & Richard Wilk. Note: carbon footprints of investments were calculated using equity stakes held in a company by each individual and estimates of the carbon impact of company's holdings calculated using their declarations on emissions



purchases, such as the \$500m superyacht that Oceano built recently for Bezos. The carbon emissions of the 127-metre yacht, which took three years to build, are, at a minimum, about 7,154 tonnes a year, according to Wilk and Barros's analysis.

The superyachts owned by the likes of Bezos, Abramovich, the former Google tycoons Page and Eric Schmidt and by Bernard Arnault, the French tycoon at the helm of a jewellery and fashion empire, have carbon footprints that far exceed those of the private jets owned by 10 of the 12 billionaires. A superyacht kept on permanent standby generates about 7,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year, according to the analysis.

Meanwhile, the financial interests of the elite billionaires give them enormous influence, "which they use to leverage local and national governments, gaining exemptions from taxes and privileges that allow them to pollute and to influence laws regulating pollution", said Wilk, a professor of anthropology at Indiana University.

Some use that influence to tackle social and environmental issues. Bezos has committed to spending \$10bn via his Earth Fund. The Google co-founder Sergey Brin has funded a non-profit focused on climate change. Page, Schmidt, Dell, Slim and Oracle's Larry Ellison all have philanthropic foundations.

Musk has argued that his work with Tesla and SolarCity has made huge contributions to change. Another of the 12, Laurene Powell Jobs, runs the philanthropic Emerson Collective. Arnault's LVMH established an environmental development unit in 1992.

A spokesperson for Gates told the Guardian he had taken many steps to reduce his personal emissions impact, adding: "Bill will continue to invest billions of his own resources into clean energy and climate change innovations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help make these technologies more affordable."

None of the other billionaires provided comment on the record.

Oxfam's research found that the emissions from the investments of 125 billionaires averaged 3.1m tonnes per billionaire. This is more than a million times higher than the average emissions created by the bottom 90% of the world's population. ●

SANDRA LAVILLE IS A GUARDIAN ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

ANALYSIS
COP28

Heating up Dubai summit where carbon inequality is visible from front gates

By Jonathan Watts



Delegates at Cop28 need only step out of the security gates of the conference centre in Dubai to witness the carbon divide. The United Arab Emirates is one of the world's most unequal nations, largely as a result of the wealth that its rulers have accumulated from pumping oil and gas out of the desert, and the poor conditions of the migrant workers who make up 80% of the population.

Its ruler, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is the scion of arguably the richest family on the planet. By one estimate, the Al Nahyan clan, who own 6% of the world's oil reserves, are worth more than \$300bn. The family's climate footprint from investments is

1.3m

The number of deaths that can be attributed over the next few decades to climate impacts caused by the emissions of the richest 1%

similarly spectacular. The Al Nahyan royals control International Holding Co, which owns stakes in Manchester City football club, a Formula One racetrack, the Ferrari World indoor theme park, the spacecraft manufacturer SpaceX, large chunks of London's Berkeley Square and a dozen or so palaces. This month, it raised its stake in the Indian coalmining company Adani Enterprises. It had the fastest-growing stock valuation in the world - 28,000% in just five years.

At the other end of the spectrum is the climate-vulnerable migrant labour force, mostly from India, the Philippines and north Africa. They work on construction sites, in restaurants and as office cleaners, with monthly incomes ranging from \$300 to \$750, barely enough to cover rent. Their carbon consumption is marginal and their climate exposure is dangerously high. Many labour outside - where temperatures frequently exceed 40C - including as part of the Cop28 preparations, and they make up a disproportionate number of heatstroke cases. If global temperatures rise to 3C above pre-industrial levels, then the number of extremely hot days each year in Dubai will double.

It is a similar story in many parts of the world, where temperature has become a marker of social status. In Mumbai, India, the vast Dharavi slum gets more than 5C hotter than the neighbouring gated communities of the middle class. In São Paulo, Brazil, tens of thousands of residents crammed into the poorly ventilated and drought-afflicted Paraisópolis (Paradise

▼ Workers in Dubai often cope with temperatures above 40C



City) favela look up at their wealthy middle-class neighbours in a residential tower where each of the 12 floors has a balcony with a swimming pool.

It is becoming clearer that the climate crisis worsens inequality and inequality worsens the climate crisis. According to a formula used by the US Environmental Protection Agency, there are 226 excess deaths worldwide for every million tonnes of carbon pumped into the air. Based on this "mortality cost" formula, Oxfam calculates that the emissions of the richest 1% in one year are enough to cause 1.3m deaths over the coming decades from excess heat and other climate impacts. Or take food supplies: Oxfam estimates that the combined effect of the carbon emissions of the 1% over the past 30 years are equivalent to wiping out an entire year's harvest of EU corn, US wheat, Bangladeshi rice and Chinese soya beans.

And not just poor countries are affected. Carbon inequality and climate injustice are intertwined with sexism, racism, the denial of Indigenous rights and other drivers of inequality. Studies show that black residents in New York are twice as likely to die of heat-related diseases as white residents. Black neighbourhoods in New Orleans and Houston bore the greatest losses from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Harvey.

**CYPRUS
CONFIDENTIAL****How Putin's
oligarchs moved
their assets**

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Spotlight



ISRAEL/PALESTINE

West Bank settlers see Gaza war as vindicating their stance

By Jason Burke WEST BANK

Tamal Sikurel pats her belly, swollen with her sixth child, and smiles. "It is part of the war effort," she said. Behind her is a school empty of pupils and homes empty of their former inhabitants. Beyond the buildings are dry hills sloping down to the Jordan valley.

"For thousands of generations we have always had to fight to justify our existence ... I feel the power of that history every day. We have all the biblical rights, historical rights and moral right to keep ourselves safe here." This 35-year-old, and the other 500,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank, are

now at the centre of a growing storm of violence and controversy as the war between Israel and Hamas moves into its seventh week.

Some are motivated by religious or nationalistic reasons, others by the lower cost of living. What was once seen as a pioneer lifestyle is now often very comfortable: some early settlements, once tiny rudimentary "wildcat" outposts, are now well established and wealthy, with security guards at the entrance and fences topped with cameras and barbed wire. Their population has surged 16% in the last five years.

▲ Half a million Jewish settlers live in West Bank settlements such as Efrat

MAHMOUD ILLEAN/AP

Continued →

Israeli human rights groups say settlers, already empowered by the most rightwing government in Israel's history, have exploited the conflict to intensify efforts to force Palestinians out of their homes on the West Bank.

Last week, the French government condemned this as a "policy of terror". President Joe Biden, a staunch ally of Israel, said last month the attacks by "extremist settlers" amounted to "pouring gasoline" on the already burning fires in the Middle East.

Such criticism may explain a recent public relations effort by settlers to improve their image. Regavim, a pro-settler NGO usually hostile to international journalists, drove a busload of reporters into the south Hebron hills last week while giving them a lecture about the conflict.

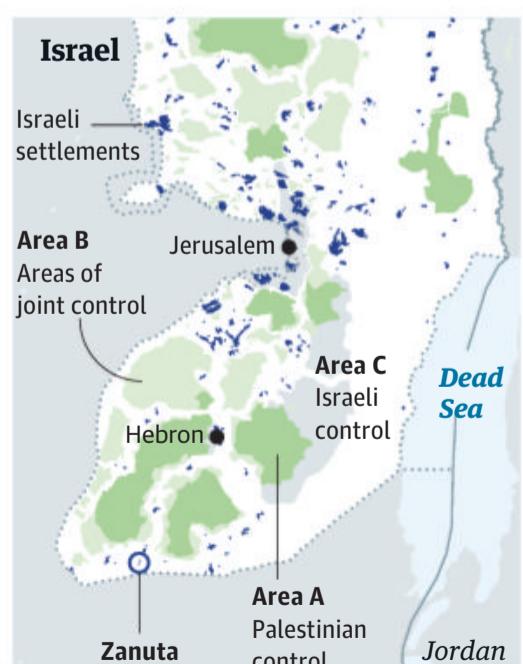
One stop on the tour was Zanuta, a village where the Guardian had previously reported that weeks of intense settler violence had, by the end of October, forced its 150 Palestinian residents to make a reluctant collective decision to leave.

Naomi Kahn, a spokesperson for Regavim, denied that there was any campaign to displace Palestinians and said the former Zanuta residents were "squatters". Paid to live in the village by the EU, they had simply decided to "move on" when the payments stopped.

Many of the settlers who spoke to the Observer said they believe they had been vindicated by the 7 October attacks launched by Hamas into southern Israel, killing 1,200 Israelis.

Zones of control

The West Bank is split into three areas



'We have all the biblical rights, historical rights and moral right to keep ourselves safe here'

Tamal Sikurel
Jewish settler

Yochai Damari, leader of the Har Hevron regional council, which administers settlements across a swathe of the southern West Bank, claimed the 7 October attacks had given "Arabs courage and inspiration".

After an Israeli soldier was killed at a checkpoint on the West Bank's route 60, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's national security minister, said last week that Israel needed to deal with Hamas in the West Bank "exactly like we are dealing with Gaza".

Gaza health authorities say at least 12,000 people have been confirmed killed in the Israeli bombardment and ground invasion - more than 5,000 of them children. At least a million have been displaced.

Many of the more hardline settlers say they want peace but are "on the frontline of the war".

Sikurel claimed that last month's attacks had been a "wake-up call", demonstrating "that we live on different planets". Such rhetoric is common across Israel after last month's attacks, but has long characterised the views of many settlers.

"I have heard so much ... about the violence of the settlers and it is so weird," said Orit Marketinger, a 24-year-old from the settlement of Otniel whose father was shot dead in 2016 by a Palestinian. "We want peace and we believe in the law. They believe in hate and they kill us just because we are Jewish."

A total of 138 Israelis and 1,012 Palestinians were killed on the West Bank from 2008 to September this year, according to the UN. Since 7 October, Israeli internal security services are aware of four cases in which the settlers shot and killed Palestinians, the local Haaretz newspaper has reported.

The settlers deride the widely held view that their presence is not only a major obstacle to any possible progress towards peace, however unlikely at this current moment of conflict, but also a source of much of the violence sweeping the occupied territories.

This year was already the deadliest in at least 15 years for West Bank residents, with some 200 Palestinians and 26 Israelis killed, according to UN data.

Nathalie Sopinsky, originally from Delaware in the US, has lived in the settlement of Susiya for 16 years and leads a first-response medical service for settlers.

Sopinsky said she had been extremely busy with "normal injuries, terrorism injuries" but had made a "lifestyle choice" to live in the occupied West Bank.

"There is no traffic, plenty of parking," she said. "I go out to walk with my daughter in the morning. There are goats and shepherds. It's all fresh and natural." *Observer*

JASON BURKE IS THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CORRESPONDENT OF THE GUARDIAN

ANALYSIS
ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Edging closer Hopes rise as hostage release deal looks more 'credible'

By Jason Burke JERUSALEM
and Patrick Wintour



Israel and Hamas appeared to be edging towards a deal this week that would see the release of some hostages, possibly in return for a limited ceasefire and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Senior US and Israeli officials all suggested an agreement was close last Sunday, although observers have cautioned that any potential deal could easily collapse.

Michael Herzog, the Israeli ambassador to Washington, said Israel hoped a significant number of hostages could be released.

Qatar has been at the centre of mediation efforts to reach an agreement that would lead to the release of hostages.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, the Qatari prime minister, at a press conference in Doha with Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, said: "The challenges facing the agreement are just practical and logistical."

The White House deputy national security adviser, Jon Finer, said any agreement to free "considerably more than 12" hostages would be likely to also include an extended pause in the fighting and allow for the distribution of humanitarian assistance in Gaza.

A staged release would be the first de-escalatory step since Hamas launched an assault on Israel on 7 October, during which it captured more than 200 hostages and took them to Gaza. So far, only four hostages have been released. It is thought 239 people from 26 different countries are still being held, including some dual nationals.

Hamas has claimed that as many as 30 hostages have been killed by Israeli bombing of Gaza, but there is no independent verification of this.

The Washington Post, citing people familiar with plans for the deal, reported that Israel, the US and Hamas militants had reached a tentative agreement to free dozens of women and children held hostage in Gaza in exchange for a five-day pause in fighting.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said no deal had been reached. However, he is under domestic pressures to free

the hostages. The challenge of doing this while completing the goal of eliminating Hamas as a military force capable of striking Israel again has led to disagreements among Israeli policymakers and the security establishment, as well as society more broadly.

Senior military officers say the two objectives can be reconciled as military pressure on Hamas would lead to concessions over hostages. It is not clear that all Israeli cabinet ministers agree. Israeli media have reported divisions among senior ministers, with some favouring accepting the deal reportedly tabled by Qatar before international pressure or rising military casualties weaken Israel's bargaining position. Others argue that Israel should hold out for better terms to avoid setting a precedent for future negotiations to obtain the freedom of any remaining hostages.

Though there has been no official comment on the split, one source described the reports as "credible".

Brett McGurk, the US president's senior adviser on the Middle East, said last Saturday the onus was on Hamas to release the hostages, and if it did so, there would be a humanitarian pause as well as a considerable increase in the flow of aid. He was speaking at an International Institute for Strategic Studies security conference in Bahrain. The Jordanian foreign minister, Ayman Safadi, said at the same conference that no preconditions should be set for a humanitarian pause.

Details of the negotiations, in an outline six-page paper, suggested any deal would include the release of some Palestinian political prisoners - the key demand being made by the Hamas military command. Disputes have included the length of any ceasefire and whether women deemed to be combatants would be included in the first releases.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has been involved in identifying and verifying the identity of hostages. It has tried to keep its role under the radar so as to ensure a deal goes ahead.

PATRICK WINTOUR IS DIPLOMATIC EDITOR FOR THE GUARDIAN

Some argue that Israel should hold out for better terms to avoid setting a precedent



▲ Protesters in Tel Aviv demand the return of the hostages
NIR KEIDAR/ANADOLU/GTETY



UNITED KINGDOM



Sunak's impossible Tory chemistry test

The PM has lurched from one strategy reset to another – but none have healed party divisions

By Toby Helm

Dressed in a crimson velvet cloak, trimmed and lined with white ermine, and flanked by two senior Conservative peers, Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, the new foreign secretary, was formally introduced into the House of Lords on Monday amid all the colour and splendour that the second chamber affords.

The former prime minister, who everyone thought had bid a final farewell to Westminster in 2016 after the humiliation of the Brexit referendum, delivered his maiden speech the next day in a debate on international

trade. It could go down as the political comeback of the year, if not the decade.

The imagery of the return of an ex-PM who left under such a cloud, and was subsequently embroiled in a major lobbying scandal, may not be perfect for Rishi Sunak, as he attempts his latest leadership reset.

But something had to be done. The Tories were in a death spiral. “Suella [Braverman] was mad and taking us down,” said one Conservative MP. “This was what Rishi came up with. It may help, it may not.”

The decision stunned everyone in the Tory party, including good friends of the former occupant of No 10, and those who had served in his governments. “David always had a thing, I thought, about not wanting to be in the Lords. Yes, I was surprised,” said one ally, now in the upper house. “Like Major, Blair, Brown, he didn’t seem to want to do it, having been prime minister.”

Negotiations on the comeback were kept as the tightest of secrets in Downing Street. Only two or three people are said to have known anything, apart from Sunak and Cameron himself.

Former Tory leader William Hague is believed to have been the key interlocutor, and to have convinced Cameron that a stint as foreign secretary (Hague had been in the job under Cameron) would be a good way to restore his reputation at home and abroad and conclude his career on a high note.

When the news broke on 13 November, it came as a bolt from the blue. Sunak and his team knew it was a gamble. They were aware that today’s Tory parliamentary party is far more rightwing than it had been in Cameron’s time. The 2019 election result saw many more rightwing pro-Brexit MPs arrive, particularly from “red wall” seats. But among southern and metropolitan voters, Sunak and his allies thought Cameron would play well.

Within hours of the reshuffle, groups of rightwing Tory backbenchers were, however, meeting in the Commons to discuss both setbacks for their wing of the party: the loss of standard-bearer Braverman, and the return of the remaine and social liberal Cameron.

James Cleverly, an affable moderate, had made way at the foreign office and taken Braverman’s place.

Last Tuesday, Downing Street minds were turning to the announcement, due the following morning,

from the supreme court on the legality of the government's policy of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda, which had been championed by Braverman and had got bogged down in legal challenges. It was the cornerstone of Sunak's immigration policy. One of the five pledges on which he has staked his reputation is to "stop the boats".

As No 10 wargamed how to respond to the possible scenarios, there was also nervousness about what Braverman might do. After her sacking, she had promised to say more in due course.

As it turned out, Braverman decided to go for broke on the afternoon before the supreme court gave its verdict, and in terms that astounded everyone. Even experienced Westminster hands had never seen a resignation letter like it. And in what seemed to be an attempt to pre-empt a negative judgment by the supreme court, she accused Sunak of failing to prepare for that eventuality in advance.

So extreme was her language and so intemperate, that most Tory MPs thought the letter had damaged her more than Sunak, ending any remote chance she may once have had of becoming leader. "It just showed that she was not fit to be home secretary in the first place, let alone leader," said one senior backbencher.

But none of this was playing well for Sunak or the Tories. The latest reset was merely highlighting party divisions, not healing them. The media coverage was all about Conservative turmoil and splits. Labour's own problems, over Keir Starmer's refusal to call for a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, were attracting less coverage than they otherwise would have.

It was also escaping no one that Sunak now seemed to be attempting to reset his government every few weeks, whether it was at the party conference, through the king's speech or by conducting blockbuster reshuffles. And each reset seemed out of sync, in policy terms, with the last one.

In September, at the Tory conference in Manchester, Sunak had become the "change" prime minister, differentiating himself from the Conservative PMs who had gone before him - including Cameron.

As Starmer would put it at prime minister's questions, "his [Sunak's] big idea is to keep turning his government on and off at the wall and hoping

that we see signs of life". After 13 years it was not proving easy to find a way forward whichever way Sunak looked.

Last Wednesday morning offered a brief ray of hope for Sunak and his team as it emerged that inflation had dropped to 4.6% in the year to October, down from 6.7% the month before. But then the supreme court delivered its unanimous verdict.

A senior Labour frontbencher could not believe the party's good fortune. "They [the Tories] had had their best news for months, even years, and then ... the Rwanda decision."

The supreme court ruling was the cue for even worse Tory bloodletting. The court found that the Rwanda policy was unlawful because migrants faced a real risk of being sent back to their home countries where they could be mistreated. This would be in breach of the European convention on human rights (ECHR), which is enshrined in the Human Rights Act.

Sunak's entire immigration policy looked in shreds. Rightwing MPs started calling for the UK to reassess its position in the international legal system. Danny Kruger, the MP for Devizes, said the scope of the ruling meant the UK's involvement in other treaties and conventions had to be considered. "The government should immediately announce an intention to do what is necessary to insist on our sovereignty. That means legislation to override the effect of the European court, of the European convention on human rights itself and of other conventions including the refugee convention if necessary."

Speaking after an emergency meeting of the rightwing New Conservatives group of Tory MPs, the party's deputy chairman, Lee Anderson, said: "It's a dark day for British people. We should just get the planes in the air right

◀ Rishi Sunak during a visit to Bolsover school in Chesterfield
PETER POWELL/PA

now and send them to Rwanda. People are fed up in this country. They're fed up of being taken for a ride and paying their taxes to people who have no right to be here and are criminals."

Sunak held a press conference in Downing Street and announced he was taking the "extraordinary step" of rushing emergency legislation through to declare that Rwanda was a safe country. There would also be a new treaty with Rwanda as part of legal process to keep the policy alive. There was a sense of desperation spreading across government.

Poison pen
On page after blistering page, Suella Braverman tore into the prime minister, accusing him of having 'manifestly and repeatedly failed' to honour promises he had supposedly made to her when she agreed to back his leadership campaign last year. Braverman's support for Sunak had been vital in preventing Boris Johnson from mounting a comeback. 'Either your distinctive style of government means you are incapable of doing so or as I must surely conclude now, you never had any intention of keeping your promises,' she wrote.

The immigration minister, Robert Jenrick, appeared to stake the survival of Sunak's government on a strategy that would in effect mean the UK challenging international law. "I don't see a path to victory at the next general election unless we resolve this issue," he said.

The legal establishment reacted with barely concealed horror. Bar Council chair Nick Vineall said: "If parliament were to pass legislation the effect of which was to reverse a finding of fact made by a court of competent jurisdiction, that would raise profound questions about the respective role of the courts and parliament in countries that subscribe to the rule of law."

In the Commons, Cleverly suggested it would not be necessary to leave the ECHR, while in a press briefing Sunak signalled this would have to be an option, despite the huge knock-on effects such a move would have, not least the fact that the ECHR was central to the Good Friday agreement.

Immediately, there were indications from senior peers that such emergency legislation would face numerous challenges in the upper house.

Lucy Powell, shadow leader of the Commons, asked which bills in the king's speech would have to be ditched to make way for new Rwanda law. "The ink is not even dry on the king's speech yet the prime minister is already proposing a treaty and new laws to mask their utter failure to get a grip on illegal immigration."

Tory friends of the new foreign secretary in the Lords, meanwhile, raised the question of what the newest recruit to their ranks might think: "All I know is I can't see him wanting to leave the ECHR. If that were to become policy I think we could have a serious problem." *Observer*

TOBY HELM IS THE OBSERVER'S POLITICAL EDITOR



Smoke alarm

Albania's opposition set off smoke bombs and started a small fire in the middle of parliament in a failed attempt to stop the chamber from voting on the 2024 budget. MPs involved in the protest on Monday piled chairs in the centre of the chamber and smoke filled the air as security kept protesters back from the seat of the prime minister, Edi Rama. One MP appeared to light a small fire that was passed forward in a container before flames briefly spread and were doused by surrounding politicians.

The de facto leader of the opposition Democratic party, Sali Berisha, a former prime minister who was also Albania's first post-communist president from 1992 until 1997, has accused the government of trying to silence the opposition in parliament, where Rama's Socialist party has a majority.

"The battle has no way back," Berisha told reporters after the disturbance in the chamber where the budget passed a first vote in a session that lasted less than five minutes. "Our goal is to bring pluralism to parliament."

FLORION GOGA/REUTERS







UKRAINE

Optimism fades as another winter of war begins

Rumours of rifts at the top, exhaustion after two years of fighting and frustration among allies dampen Kyiv's mood

By Shaun Walker KYIV

There is a subtle yet unmistakable sense of gloom in Kyiv at the moment, and not only because of the dark afternoons and plunging mercury of an eastern European November. A number of factors have combined to create perhaps the most downbeat mood about the prospects for a

swift and decisive Ukrainian victory over Russia since the first weeks of the full-scale invasion.

"At the end of last year and beginning of this one, there was such euphoria. Now we see the other extreme, the down, and I guess we will see some ups and downs for some time to come," said Bartosz Cichocki, who last month finished a four-year posting as Poland's ambassador in Kyiv.

There are rumours of tensions in Volodymyr Zelenskiy's team, and of a rift between the president and his commander-in-chief. And the much-anticipated summer counteroffensive has been thwarted by impenetrable Russian minefields and fortifications.

The exhaustion of 21 months of fighting, the continued loss of life at the front and frustration at the slow pace with which western partners continue to provide weaponry have combined so that for the first time since the early stages of the war, some voices have quietly pondered the possibility of ceasefire negotiations, while accepting they would be risky and could benefit Russia.

The horror unfolding in the Middle East has taken attention away from Ukraine and slowed down flows of ammunition. There is also increasing "Ukraine fatigue" in western capitals, as well as the looming prospect of a second term for Donald

▲ Ukrainian soldiers on duty in the city of Vuhledar
ANADOLU/GETTY

Trump in the US, which could upend support from Kyiv's biggest ally.

There are a few bright spots, too: on the battlefield, news that Ukrainian troops have dug into positions on the eastern bank of the Dnipro River in the southern Kherson region, possibly opening up a path for a push towards Crimea, as well as Ukraine's success targeting the Russian Black Sea fleet. Diplomatically, the EU's announcement that it plans to begin membership talks with Ukraine brought cheer.

But as Ukrainians brace for another winter of potential Russian attacks on critical infrastructure, as well as the ongoing nightly terror from missiles and drones aimed at Ukrainian cities, the optimism of six months ago that the defeat of Russia and the return of Donbas and Crimea could be just around the corner has begun to fade.

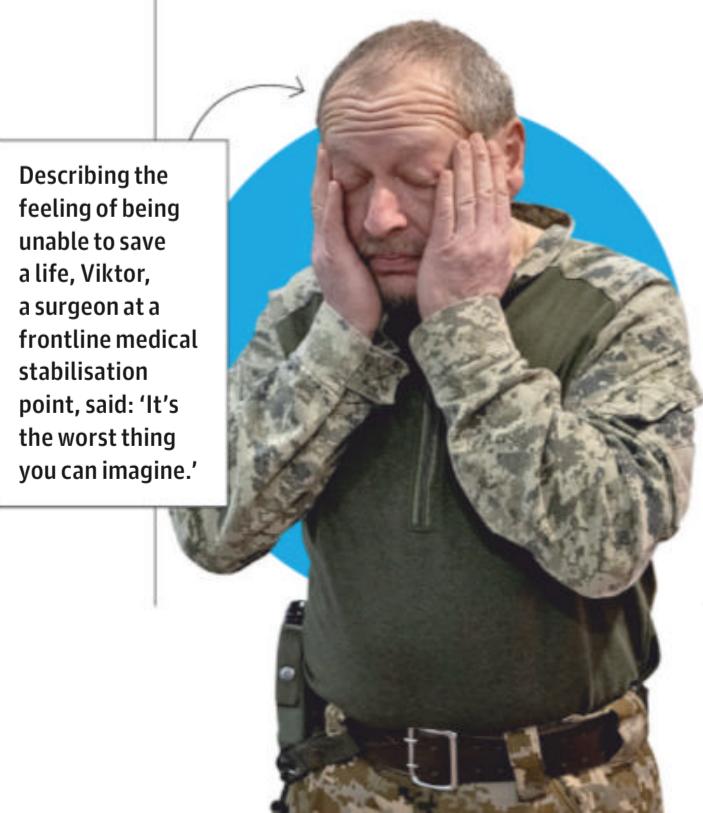
"It won't be the victory that we dreamed of and it will take much longer than we thought," said Volodymyr Omelyan, a former infrastructure minister who signed up for the territorial defence forces on the first day of the war and is a captain in the Ukrainian army.

Most people recognise that as long as Vladimir Putin is in the Kremlin, lasting peace is unlikely, and any pause in the fighting would be used by Russia to rearm. Surveys show that the majority of Ukrainians oppose negotiations with Russia, especially if they would involve acknowledging lost territory.

At the same time, the exhaustion of those who have been at the front since the start of the conflict, the difficulty in mobilising new recruits and the failure of the counteroffensive to take back territory have led to cautious voices suggesting a change of tack.

"The choice is very simple. If we are ready to send another 300,000 or

Describing the feeling of being unable to save a life, Viktor, a surgeon at a frontline medical stabilisation point, said: 'It's the worst thing you can imagine.'



500,000 lives of Ukrainian soldiers to capture Crimea and liberate Donbas, and if we get the right number of tanks and F16s from the west, we can do this,” Omelyan said. “But I don’t see the 500,000 more people ready to die and I don’t see the readiness of the west to send the type and quantity of weapons we would need.”

The other option, said Omelyan, would be “a ceasefire deal to make great reforms, become a member of Nato and the EU, then Russia will collapse and later we will take back Crimea and Donbas”.

But that may be wishful thinking and Zelenskiy has said any negotiations would play into Russia’s hands.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the Ukrainian president, conceded that this was a difficult phase of the war but said this stage “requires the strongest concentration” to keep going.

A recent interview with Zelenskiy by the journalist Simon Shuster suggested that even inside Zelenskiy’s inner circle there were people who doubted his belief in Ukraine’s victory.

Shuster quoted a frustrated Zelenskiy aide who said the president was delusional about the prospect of victory on the battlefield. “We’re out of options. We’re not winning. But try telling him that,” said the aide.

For the first year of the war, Ukrainians were united behind Zelenskiy. That agreement has started to fray.

The president is acutely worried about the “Churchill phenomenon”, according to one informed source, of electoral defeat for a successful wartime leader. With presidential elections due next March, there had been some suggestion Zelenskiy might attempt to hold a vote, giving himself a new mandate before what may be a more difficult phase of the war.

Zelenskiy eventually ruled out a vote next spring but there are now caveats to wartime unity.

Zelenskiy’s approval ratings are still high but so are those of Valeriy Zaluzhny, the commander-in-chief, widely seen as a possible future challenger for the presidency, although he has never articulated any political ambitions.

Cichocki said there had been an increase in political jockeying. “Politics is back in Ukraine,” he said. “The original consolidation of one unified force fighting evil, it’s different now.”

SHAUN WALKER IS THE GUARDIAN’S CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE CORRESPONDENT

Commander fired
Volodymyr Zelenskiy has demanded rapid changes in the operations of Ukraine’s military and announced the dismissal of the commander of its medical forces.

The Ukrainian president’s move was announced last Sunday as he met defence minister Rustom Umerov and coincided with debate over the conduct of the war, with questions over how quickly a counteroffensive in the east and south is proceeding.

Zelenskiy said he had replaced Maj Gen Tetiana Ostashchenko as commander of the medical forces. ‘The task is clear ... we need a fundamentally new level of medical support for our soldiers,’ he said.

ANALYSIS SPAIN

Long division Pedro Sánchez stakes power on polarising deal with separatists

By Sam Jones MADRID



At the end of an investiture debate that had been fraught, savage and bizarre, even by recent standards, the defeated leader of Spain’s conservative opposition offered his socialist rival a handshake. It was not accompanied by his warmest wishes. “This was a mistake,” said Alberto Núñez Feijóo, the leader of the People’s party (PP).

Given Feijóo’s other characterisations of moves Sánchez has made to secure his Spanish Socialist Workers’ party (PSOE) another four-year term, “mistake” seemed oddly mild.

Sánchez’s decision to accede to the demands of the two main Catalan pro-independence parties – who had made their congressional backing for his new government dependent on an amnesty for hundreds of people involved in the unilateral push to secede from Spain six years ago – has proved profoundly divisive.

And overheated as much of the rhetoric has been, it cannot mask the fact that a lot of Spaniards have grave concerns about the amnesty. A poll in mid-September showed that 70% of voters, including 59% of the people who voted for the PSOE in July’s general election, were against the amnesty law. The issue has brought hundreds of thousands of people out to protest.

The most high-profile beneficiary

► A demonstrator in Pamplona protests against Spain’s new government

of the proposed law will be Carles Puigdemont, the former Catalan regional president, whose hardline Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia) party pushed for the amnesty alongside the more moderate Catalan Republican Left (ERC). For many, offering this to Puigdemont is unthinkable. Or wrong. Or both.

Why, then, did Sánchez take the risk? The short answer is that he had to. “We all know that Sánchez took up the issue of the amnesty because he needed Junts’s votes,” said José Pablo Ferrández, of Ipsos Spain. “If he hadn’t needed those votes, we wouldn’t be talking about this now, nor about how important it will be to Spain’s development and to peace.”

The decision will also have been driven by Sánchez’s character. One defining characteristic has been his willingness to gamble. It paid off when he used a no-confidence motion to turf the corruption-mired PP government of Mariano Rajoy out of office five years ago, and when he called July’s inconclusive election after the PSOE’s drubbing in May’s regional and local elections.

While the coming months promise to be turbulent for Sánchez’s new coalition, he has repeatedly shown he is not to be underestimated.

The problem is that the political stakes have rarely been higher.

“If this legislature turns out badly, the Spanish left could be in opposition for 20 years, and history won’t remember Sánchez fondly,” said political scientist Pablo Simón. “But if it turns out well, we could see the pro-independence parties returning to the path of governability ... But there are a lot of people who will be hoping Sánchez comes a cropper.” *Observer*

SAM JONES IS THE GUARDIAN AND OBSERVER’S MADRID CORRESPONDENT





Cyprus confidential

An investigation into the offshore services in Cyprus by the Guardian and a team of reporters led by the ICIJ and Paper Trail Media

SPECIAL REPORT
CYPRUS CONFIDENTIAL

Sanctioned

How Russian oligarchs moved their assets after invasion

Biggest leak of financial data from Cyprus raises concerns over EU state's role in money movements by Kremlin allies

By Simon Goodley, Helena Smith and Juliette Garside

Cyprus has vowed to tighten controls on its financial sector as an investigation published by the Guardian and its reporting partners reveals oligarchs transferred hundreds of millions in assets while sanctions loomed after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The role of the blue-chip accountants PwC Cyprus and other advisers in managing transactions as Vladimir Putin's forces launched their assault has emerged from Cyprus Confidential, a cache of 3.6m files leaked by an anonymous source to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and Germany's Paper Trail Media, which shared access with the Guardian and other partners.

The largest ever financial data leak from Cyprus also sheds light on how opaque offshore structures managed by accountants and corporate service providers in the EU member state may have enabled undisclosed payments to an influential western journalist, and potential breaches of rules around football club financing.

The Cypriot government has responded by promising a "zero-tolerance approach" to sanctions violations as it battles to safeguard its status as a financial centre.

Kremlin gateway
The leak reveals the scale of Cyprus's role as a gateway into Europe for the Kremlin-connected elite. Among the 104 Russian billionaires Forbes magazine identified in 2023, two-thirds appear alongside family members as clients of the island's professional service providers. There are records relating to 71 Russian clients who have come under sanctions since February 2022. Many of these relationships have since been terminated, advisers say.

A spokesperson said Cyprus was receiving technical support from the British government to create a sanctions implementation unit, with plans to be submitted this month alongside a report on how its authorities investigate and prosecute financial crime. It has also joined an EU cross-border project on making sanctions effective.

The president, attorney general, key cabinet members and officials were briefed last week over progress on implementing tighter controls.

The Cypriot government spokesperson, Konstantinos Letymbiotis, said: "The strategy of our government, who took office in March 2023, is of zero tolerance on matters concerning sanctions evasion and law violation, and by extension, to safeguard the country's name as a reliable financial centre. I would like to stress that our government is unequivocally committed to fighting corruption and illicit finance and take all necessary actions to ensure full implementation of EU sanctions."

The Cyprus Confidential files reveal:

- PwC Cyprus and other advisers helped one of Russia's most powerful oligarchs, Alexei Mordashov, attempt to transfer £1bn (\$1.2bn) in a public company on the day he was placed under EU sanctions. The Guardian has been told the transfer is subject to an "ongoing" criminal investigation.
- €600,000 (\$650,000) of undisclosed payments from companies linked to the same oligarch to Hubert Seipel, an influential German journalist, to support the publication of two books about Putin.
- Tens of millions in offshore payments made by Roman Abramovich during his ownership of Chelsea football club to agents, scouts and club officials that may have breached strict football rules on accounting and financial fair play.
- Undisclosed agreements that allowed Abramovich and the super-agent Pini Zahavi to control the careers of 21 young footballers under third-party ownership arrangements, which have been compared to bonded labour.

The Cyprus finance ministry said it had launched a criminal investigation into the transfer of Mordashov's stake in Europe's largest tour operator, Tui.

The tycoon's name appeared on the EU's sanctions list on 28 February 2022, with documents appearing to show his advisers attempted to transfer his £1bn stake to Marina Mordashova, who is reportedly his life partner, on the same day. A spokesperson for the



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEX MELLON/GUARDIAN DESIGN/GETTY

ministry said a criminal investigation is being carried out.

Tui is one of the largest companies listed on the London and Hanover stock exchanges, and details of the transfer, which represented about a third of the company's shares, were declared in stock market filings beginning on 4 March 2022.

A spokesperson for Mordashov said he and his companies had always acted in line with "fair business practices and strict compliance with the regulations". They added: "All information and regulatory notifications with respect to the share transfer were duly disclosed to the relevant authorities and made public to the extent legally required shortly after the share transfer, which clearly demonstrates that there was no intention to hide something or to circumvent the laws."

A spokesperson for PwC said: "Any allegation of non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations is taken very seriously, investigated and appropriate action is taken if necessary."

Mordashov and PwC said they were unaware of the criminal investigation. The Guardian has seen no evidence of any intention to break rules.

The leaked documents, which date from the mid-1990s to April 2022, show nearly 800 companies and trusts registered in tax and secrecy havens that were owned or controlled by Russians who have been placed under sanctions since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea. These include more than 650 Cypriot companies and trusts.

Nikos Christodoulides, a career diplomat who was elected president in February of this year, has led efforts to bring the financial services sector into line after decades of lax regulation.

His government moved to tighten controls on Russian capital this spring when the US and UK imposed sanctions on 23 Cypriot passport holders and more than a dozen companies registered in Cyprus, including the offshore services firm MeritServus, which was revealed by the Guardian as having assisted Abramovich in transferring his assets to family members just before he was added to the sanctions list.

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Additional reporting by Rob Davies and Kate Connolly



CYPRUS CONFIDENTIAL

Grey area Roubles and rials that fuel 'shady' boom

By Helena Smith ISKELE

Top secret What are the Cyprus files?

The Cyprus Confidential files are a cache of leaked documents containing emails, banking records, company filings, trust paperwork and compliance reports. They total 1.31 terabytes of confidential financial files, amounting to more than 3.6m documents, and originate from six offshore service providers that set up, manage and list shell companies and trusts in Cyprus – as well as a company that sells access to Cypriot company data.

Russian speakers love living here, they like to be in a community and ours is growing all the time," said Ruslan Ibrayev, the salesman greeting customers at the head office of the Hub property investment firm in Iskele in Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus.

The area, he beams, has become a magnet for buyers from the former Soviet Union. "Business is good," said the young Kazakhstani. "Very good."

Developers would agree. Construction activity in the island's self-proclaimed republic is booming.

Tower blocks are multiplying thanks to an influx of roubles and Iranian rials that have led to cash-flows increasing and foreign currency reserves soaring to about 80% of the value of bank holdings.

It is clear that after Anglo-US sanctions were slapped on individuals and entities for "enabling" oligarchs to manage assets in the internationally recognised Republic of Cyprus, Russians seeking to move their money inside Europe are looking elsewhere.

And, increasingly, it appears they have looked no further than across the UN buffer zone that bisects the war-split island, to the self-styled Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Few places know this more than Iskele, a seaside town that Turkish Cypriots have come to call a new

Limassol, the city to the south that played no small part in earning Cyprus the moniker of Moscow on the Med.

Iskele's boulevards are lined with Cyrillic shop signs, billboards promising "the dream life", luxury car dealerships and cryptocurrency outlets.

"The north is a de facto state. It's not bound by international agreements, has weak institutions and is only recognised by Turkey," said Sertaç Sonan, a political scientist, who describes the construction boom as "a money printing business" for the breakaway state. "It's a grey area, perfect for anyone wanting to do shady business."

Arrivals at Ercan airport have shot up since Putin began his "special operation" in Ukraine. Green Line crossings from the south have also soared, with 58,788 Russian nationals registered as entering the enclave via checkpoints between January and September, according to the Turkish Cypriot tourist ministry. The total number of crossings is likely to be almost seven times higher in 2023 than three years ago.

"The business provider network that catered to Russians in the [Greek Cypriot] south has morphed into a new network of Turkish Cypriot lawyers creating trusts," said Mertkan Hamit, a local economist.

"The trusts are completely anonymous, they are a perfect way to hide assets, no questions asked, and that is the beauty of it for money laundering. The ultimate goal is not to stay in Cyprus. The goal is to sell the assets, have the money 'cleaned', and move on to London, Dubai, Manhattan."

Turkish Cypriot authorities have promised to crack down, and both the government and opposition have vowed to collaborate on new anti-money laundering legislation.

But, as in the south, where the "golden passport" scheme raked in more than €9bn (\$9.8bn) for the country, insiders say they have turned a blind eye because there is so much money to be made in building permits, transfer taxes and kickbacks.

"There are lots of Russians here," said Ivan, who arrived three years ago in the north, where he has since snapped up three flats. "And yes, I am Ukrainian, but all of us love this place. It is not like London where the banks always ask, 'Where did you get this from, where did you get that from?' But in a few years, maybe, when we sell up, I think England will be the place we want to go."



PROTEST

Authorities clamp down on the right to protest

As pro-Palestine marches gather pace, many nations are banning events – with little protection from EU laws

By Daniel Boffey

In the first weeks that followed 7 October, when Hamas's killing of 1,400 people in Israel triggered war with Israel, about a quarter of the pro-Palestine marches registered with the authorities in Germany's main cities were banned. According to the magazine *Der Spiegel*, 90% of those that went ahead had conditions imposed upon them.

In France, it took the intervention of the highest administrative court to stymie a plan by that country's interior minister, Gérald Darmanin, to prohibit all protests organised by those calling for a ceasefire. Since then, local prefects are making an assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Elsewhere in Europe, protests have been prohibited in countries including Austria, Switzerland and Hungary, while a row in the UK over a pro-Palestine march in London on Armistice Day led to a rupture between Downing Street and the Metropolitan police.

The response of Amnesty International has been to remind national governments that they "have a legal obligation to ensure that people are able to peacefully express their grief, concerns and their solidarity".

It is argued by some that the past few weeks have highlighted the fragility of the ecosystem of national laws and supranational rights relating to the European tradition of protest.

"Technically, there's no right to protest per se that's protected by an article in the European convention on human rights," said Richard Martin, an assistant professor of law at the London School of Economics. "So it's a combination of freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly across articles 10 and 11 that are doing the work. But crucially, they're qualified rights."

"So what they're saying is things like that peaceful protest is protected by these rights, but the states can rely on a number of legitimate aims to qualify

▲ A silent march for peace in the Middle East moves through central Paris last weekend

URMAN LIONEL/ABACA/
SHUTTERSTOCK

► Demonstrators with Palestinian flags in Alexanderplatz, Berlin

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY

those rights, to enact laws and allow police powers to interfere with those rights, lawfully. So really, what the ECHR is doing is providing a framework for limiting some of these rights."

From country to country, the laws around protest vary, with cultural contexts reflected in the legislation, but campaigners say the latest developments in the Middle East have supercharged a trend towards more restrictive legal frameworks.

In France, a law regulating measures relating to the strengthening of the maintenance of public order provides the authorities with the power to ban a planned demonstration deemed "likely to disturb public order".

There remains a high cultural tolerance of political protest, as the rejection of Darmanin's call for a blanket ban suggests. However, Lord Carlile, the former independent reviewer of terror legislation in the UK, noted that police methods of dispersal in France have become more robust in recent years, with more powers to deal with the violence that erupted during the *gilet jaunes* and some environmental protests. "We don't give the police teargas, we don't give them water hoses," Carlile said of the British model.

The French parliament passed controversial legislation in 2021 criminalising "the identification of an officer of the national police, a member of the national gendarmerie or an officer of the municipal police when they are taking part in a police operation", and set a punishment of five years in prison and a fine of €75,000 (\$81,500).

In Germany, authorities can prohibit an assembly if it could endanger public safety or order, albeit the risk must come from the demonstration as a

whole, not just some participants. In Berlin, two large protests took place this month but German responsibility for the Holocaust has been cited as a reason for a lack of tolerance of protest that risks fuelling antisemitism.

Holocaust denial is illegal in Germany, as are slogans that directly reference nazism. Berlin police said they had prohibited a large number of proposed pro-Palestine protests based on "an imminent danger that the gatherings would lead to incitement to hatred, antisemitic statements, glorification of violence, incitement to violence and thus to intimidation and violence".

It is argued by pro-Palestine groups that a desire to protect people from hateful speech has suffocated movements that want to highlight injustice.

In the UK, article 11 of the European convention on human rights is enshrined in domestic law in the 1998 Human Rights Act but the legislation around when the police can apply conditions on a protest has been developing, with the definition of a "risk of serious disruption" recently redefined to include when there is a "more than minor" hindrance to daily life.

A range of conditions were applied to the pro-Palestine march in London on 11 November but the police were still not able to justify banning the event. Such prohibitions have been largely imposed on far-right processions that have been organised to cause trouble. Downing Street has suggested it is now hoping to strengthen the powers of the home secretary and the police to ban demonstrations ahead of time to take into account factors other than the current threshold for action of a risk of serious public disorder.

Martin said the ECHR had been strikingly progressive in recognising that people have a *prima facie* right to disrupt and engage in civil disobedience. However, national governments were given a "wide margin of appreciation" in justifying interference in those taking advantage of their rights.

"One of the big critiques of the European convention in this area is that really it just provides a means of legitimising state action," he said. "Because ultimately, the state gets its way because it can put forward defences that say, 'We did need to intervene in this for reasons of protection of others of safety.'

"I would say, that's qualified by the fact that it's still giving you something to challenge the police by because,



▲ French police have more powers to deal with protests than their British counterparts
IAN LANGSDON/EPA

as soon as that right is engaged, the police need to be able to show the actions that they took are necessary and proportionate."

Barbora Bukovská, a senior director for law and policy at the rights advocacy group Article 19, said she did not believe the ECHR was a fragile defence but that governments were now knocking up against the rights contained in the convention.

"What is deeply problematic is the proliferation of restrictive laws around protest in many European countries that negatively impact people's ability to exercise their rights," she said.

"Those include issues like prior notification or excessive notification requirements, prior restraint on protests or overbroad prohibitions relating to 'time, place and manner' of protest activities. Many of those fail to meet international human rights standards. The UK's public order bill, with its broad definition of 'serious disruption' and introduction of offences criminalising many traditional protest tactics, such as locking on, is a good example of this trend."

Sacha Deshmukh, Amnesty International UK's chief executive, said the right to protest should not be beholden to the whim of governments. "Many people are taking to the streets across the world to show support for Palestinians and demand a ceasefire," he said.

"In Europe, we are seeing many countries restricting the right to protest whether that's targeting certain chants, Palestinian flags and signs, to subjecting protesters to police brutality and arrest. In some cases, protests have been banned altogether. Our right to protest is not subject to the opinions of political leaders."

DANIEL BOFFEY IS THE GUARDIAN'S CHIEF REPORTER

'Our right to protest is not subject to the opinions of political leaders'



JAPAN

Disrupted seasons leave haiku poets lost for words

By Justin McCurry TOKYO

Wooden tablets dotted along a path between office buildings and the Sendaibori river in eastern Tokyo mark the start of a journey by Japan's most revered poet that would result in his greatest collection of verse.

The tablets showing haiku by Matsuo Bashō are steeped in the seasonal certainties of the late 1600s. There are references to full moons, chirping cicadas and, of course, cherry blossoms.

Almost four centuries later, Bashō's words continue to inspire admiration and countless amateur exponents of the 17-syllable form, but they are also a reminder that haiku faces what some of its enthusiasts fear is an existential threat: the climate crisis.

The poems displayed at regular intervals along the promenade are intended to evoke the cooler climes of autumn, but this year they feel off kilter.

The walk begins outside the hut Bashō stayed in before setting off on an odyssey that would result in his most famous work, *Oku no Hosomichi* (The Narrow Road to the Deep North).

The sun is beginning to dip, but the air is still heavy with humidity. The exertions of walkers and cyclists, in T-shirts and shorts, making their way to the crown of the bridge are written in the sweat on their brows.

One of the poems encapsulates the feeling of seasonal misalignment.

*A whiteness whiter
than the stones of Stone Mountain
The wind in autumn*

Bashō wrote those words after a visit to a hilltop temple in Komatsu,

near the Japan Sea coast, on 18 September 1689.

Read contemporaneously, they would have evoked the arrival of cooler, crisper days. Today, though, they belong not just to another century, but to an age of symmetry between culture and the seasons that is being irrevocably blurred by the climate crisis.

Japan is no stranger to extreme weather, but summers once described as uncomfortably muggy are now so hot that they represent a real threat to human life. The country has experienced a series of unusually strong typhoons in recent years. Scientists say global heating is resulting in warmer oceans around the archipelago, threatening some marine species and affecting the migratory habits of others.

The rhythms of the natural world have informed countless haiku. In their purist form, each haiku must comprise three lines of five, seven and five syllables, and include a *kireji* - a "cutting word" that lends the verse contrast, and, crucially, a *kigo*, or seasonal reference.

The climate crisis is wreaking havoc on the *Saijiki* - the "year-time almanac" of thousands of seasonal words widely acknowledged as acceptable for inclusion in haiku. A *kigo* could refer to a particular plant or animal, the weather, seasonal festivals, the sky or the heavens. When read at a corresponding time of the year, it is supposed to stir emotions in the reader.

'The risk is that we will lose the central role of the four seasons in composing haiku'

David McMurray
Haiku poet

"With *kigo*, you're compressing three or four months into a single word," said David McMurray, a haiku poet who has curated the Asahi Shimbun newspaper's Haikuist Network column since 1995.

"Take the word mosquito ... the entire summer is packed into that one word, and it conjures up so many images."

The premature first pops of sakura buds in spring and the arrival of typhoons in the summer instead of the autumn are two notable examples of seasonal dissonance.

"The risk is that we will lose the central role of the four seasons in composing haiku and the *Saijiki* will essentially become a historical document," McMurray said.

As global heating accelerates the process of natural misalignment, the haiku writer can either drown tools in despair or simply adapt, according to Toshio Kimura, a poet and director of the Haiku International Association. Warmer, more unpredictable weather is blurring the transition from one season to the next, but haiku has the versatility to adapt, he believes: "The purpose of haiku is not to praise seasons themselves, but to try to see the human essence through nature."

However, an understated form of environmental activism is now making its way into haiku, according to Andrew Fitzsimons, a professor in the department of English language and cultures at Gakushuin University in Tokyo.

"There is a sense of being out of step with the way things have been and have been written about," said Fitzsimons, author of *Bashō: The Complete Haiku of Matsuo Bashō*.

He offered this example by the poet Namiko Yamamoto:

*Spring in the mind
if not actually
in the air*

"Haiku, like all poetry, deals with reality, both inner and outer, so haiku can't but concern itself with what it sees and what it feels about what it sees," Fitzsimons said. "More than most forms of poetry, though, haiku is particularly keyed to the everyday. Climate change, and the effects it will have on how we go about living with its daily consequences, will be an ever-present, pressing - and depressing - theme."

JUSTIN MCCURRY IS THE GUARDIAN'S TOKYO CORRESPONDENT





NEW ZEALAND



How court ruling could reshape adventure tourism

By Eva Corlett WELLINGTON

White water rafting guide Hamish Watters stands in a garage, a 30-minute drive north of Wellington city, hosing down an inflatable raft and hanging lifejackets up to dry. The owner of Wellington Rafting has just taken five tourists down the rapids of the Te Awa Kairangi/Hutt river.

It has been a good morning for it - rain the previous day has lifted the river levels, giving customers a thrilling ride as they flew over gushing white water.

It can be a dangerous sport, with potential problems around every bend, but Watters has his safety protocols down pat.

"That stuff we can mitigate, by studying the environment ... we find ourselves very, very connected to the elements," Watters said.

Customers are given a full run-down

of the hazards before they go near the water and are prepared with a safety briefing. Before hopping into the rafts, customers don hard hats, wetsuits and lifejackets.

Wellington Rafting is one of roughly 300 registered adventure tourism operators in New Zealand trying to strike a balance between offering exciting and potentially dangerous experiences while keeping their customers safe. Now, that responsibility will be even greater.

Adventure tourism safety has been pulled into sharper focus after a court ruling last month found the owners of Whakaari/White Island **guilty of failing to adequately communicate the risks** to visitors touring the active volcano.

The disaster has led to tougher regulations requiring tourist operators to tell customers about serious risks before they embark on an adventure, but questions remain over its impact on the wider adventure tourism industry, a crucial part of New Zealand's NZ\$40bn (\$24bn) tourism sector.

The Whakaari case and new regulations will extend far beyond adventure operators, said James Higham, a professor in tourism at Griffith University.

"Any tourism business that takes place in environments that are potentially dangerous will need to take note of this and take steps towards knowing what their responsibilities are."

New Zealand promotes itself as the adventure capital of the world, with some New Zealanders responsible for creating and popularising adventure sports including bungee jumping, zorbing and jet boating. Its adventure activities are so popular in part because of its record on safety. It is an

◀ Rafters exit the rapids at Shotover River, Queenstown, Otago, New Zealand

DAVID WALL/ALAMY

outlier among other jurisdictions in requiring adventure activity operators to register their activities.

"New Zealand has a global reputation in international tourism, with legal systems and tourism policies in place and a safe destination that people visit to experience nature," Higham said.

Adventure tourism is not consistently tracked as a separate industry, but figures from 2011 show that 36% of international tourists that year took part in at least one adventure tourism activity while in New Zealand, contributing \$4.1bn to the economy.

"We've become known internationally for the ability to get your blood pumping," said Rebecca Ingram, the chief executive of Tourism Industry Aotearoa, the national body for tourism operators. "We're not the sort of destination where you lie by the pool."

When Whakaari erupted, the world became aware of just how sudden and devastating New Zealand's natural hazards could be. In response to the tragedy, the Labour government announced tougher safety regulations on the industry to come into effect in April 2024, with a further sector-wide review earmarked for 2026.

These rules will heighten the onus on operators, as well as landowners, transport providers and tour companies, to communicate serious risks to customers before they buy a ticket.

The country's primary workplace and safety regulator, WorkSafe, will also receive expanded powers to shut down operators immediately and refuse registrations if there is evidence of imminent risk to people.

Many operators are already working to meet the requirements, said Ingram. But WorkSafe has not yet released "really important information" about how the rules will be applied.

Fundamentally, however, operators understand that maintaining a reputation as a safe country for adventure sports will keep the sector booming.

"It is incredibly important that we take care of our *manuhiri* [guests] and that they leave the country with wonderful memories," Ingram said.

Watters believes operators will take the new rules in their stride: "Adventure guides are really used to being dynamic and adapting to new changes - that's our work all the time, and that's why we love it."

EVA CORLETT IS A WELLINGTON-BASED REPORTER



CARDIOLOGY

Dr beat

Simple, successful steps to a healthy heart

From regular exercise to watching cholesterol levels, cardiologists share their best advice on how to keep your ticker in good working order

By Sarah Phillips

Our hearts beat 100,000 times a day, but we tend not to worry about their maintenance unless there is a problem. What should we know about how to keep this vital organ pumping? Four cardiologists give their advice on how to keep our hearts healthy.

Exercise is key

"If you put exercise into a pill, it would probably be better than anything a doctor could give you to improve heart health," says Prof Dan Augustine, a cardiologist at Royal United Hospitals Bath. The NHS recommends 150 minutes a week of moderately intense activity, such as brisk walking "that gets you a bit breathless", says Augustine, or 75 minutes of higher intensity exercise, such as running or cycling.

Be aware of what your body can do

"If you have done no exercise in the past, you need to build it up,"

says Augustine. "Older people have more cardiac problems when they are exercising." Over-40s should be aware of risk factors, such as smoking and family history. Augustine advises regular health checks.

Overdoing it can be bad too

Generally speaking, you can't do too much exercise. Intense exercise such as ultramarathons can cause some heart damage, says Augustine, "but this probably reverses after three or four days". What is more concerning, he says, is people overexerting themselves without being aware of underlying coronary disease. This can be a reason why otherwise healthy people collapse during marathons, or middle-aged men out cycling have heart attacks.

Avoid a sedentary lifestyle

"You're not going to go from zero to 100% in terms of exercise, but

Bodies are designed to be active, says Graham Stuart: 'If you think back to ancient times, we walked everywhere and did manual labour'

just think about how much you're sitting," Augustine says. "If you're getting your 10,000 steps each day then that is pretty good," says Graham Stuart, medical director of Sports Cardiology UK.

High cholesterol can be problematic
"Cholesterol is a type of fat in our bloodstream that is made in the liver and is also found in the food that we eat," says Dr Fizzah Choudry, a consultant cardiologist at St Bartholomew's in London. "Having too much can lead to furring up of the arteries, particularly the heart arteries and the vessels that supply the brain. This can lead to problems such as heart disease and stroke. The cholesterol-laden plaque that builds up in the heart arteries can reduce blood flow to the heart causing chest pain and angina but it can also cause sudden blockage of the arteries, causing a heart attack."

Inherited risk should be assessed
If you have a family member who has had a heart attack under the age of 60, you should see a doctor, says Augustine. Likewise, "if you have a parent, sibling or relative who has a heart problem that they're told is inherited, then you must get yourself checked," says Stuart. It is important to access information on how to live safely with an inherited condition, especially when participating in sport, Stuart adds.

Diet plays an integral role

Stuart recommends a Mediterranean-style diet: "Fruit, vegetables, nuts and pulses are good for blood vessels and good for the heart." "Oily fish is good for reducing bad cholesterol, inflammation, and lowering blood pressure," says Augustine.

Ditch unhealthy habits

"Stopping smoking can significantly improve your life expectancy on its own," says Tharusha Gunawardena, a cardiologist at the Royal Papworth hospital in Cambridge. He also sees a lot of younger patients who have used cocaine, which can cause a sudden heart attack straight after taking it, or heart disease in the longer term. "From a cardiac perspective, alcohol in moderation is OK," he says, as long as you stick to safe amounts.

Prioritise sleep

Working nights, Gunawardena says, has been shown to cause inflammation and worse cardiac outcomes. "There are a lot of regeneration processes that occur while we sleep and trying to get eight hours of sleep a day is important," he says. "Your heart is a muscle, an engine," says Augustine. "It needs fuelling and resting."

Hearts can sometimes race

We become more aware of our heartbeat when we are anxious or nervous, as blood is pumped faster, like when we exercise. Gunawardena explains: "Generally we don't notice our heartbeat but sometimes people do. This can be because something peculiar is happening, like their heart is racing or beating irregularly. It can sometimes be a normal phenomenon - often contemplating your heartbeat suddenly makes one aware of it, but palpitations, as a symptom, is the unusual awareness of them, where it feels odd." If someone is concerned about palpitations, especially if they are also breathless and experiencing chest pain, they should see a doctor.

What is a heart attack?

"A heart attack is when you have a blocked artery," says Choudry. "And because of the blocked artery, you don't get blood supply to a certain part of the heart. That is what causes the pain." Her team deals with almost 1,000 heart attacks a year and makes about 3,000 coronary interventions, which involve putting

'Your heart is a muscle, an engine. It needs fuelling and resting'

**Dan Augustine
Cardiologist**

stents into people's arteries when they become blocked, to prevent heart attacks.

A heart attack can feel like a heaviness in the chest

Symptoms vary, says Augustine, but a chest pain "that feels like a weight or heaviness" is common. Some patients describe it as "radiating up to their throat or down their left arm." This can be accompanied by feeling sweaty or sick. If you think you are having a heart attack you should seek urgent medical advice.

A heart attack can lead to cardiac arrest

"When a person is having a heart attack, the arteries are blocked and the muscles are starved of oxygen," says Gunawardena. "It sets off this abnormal heart rhythm and that makes the heart beat very fast and irregularly. Your heart should pump in a rhythmic, regular fashion, but when it goes into one of these abnormal heart rhythms, it pumps in a very uncoordinated fashion. And so people pass out and that is when they have what is called a cardiac arrest."

We should all learn how to do CPR ...

"I can't say how important it is that people know how to do CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation]," says Gunawardena. "If you don't know how to perform CPR then learn how to do it so you are prepared if there is a serious complication of a heart attack."

... and how to use an electric defibrillator

"Ideally they should be everywhere where there is sport," says Augustine.

Statins can be life-savers

"In the last 20 years or more, reducing cholesterol with medications such as statins has led to a dramatic reduction in mortality related to heart disease," says Choudry. "Statins are usually prescribed for all patients who have had heart disease and also those felt to be at increased risk, whether that is down to raised cholesterol or other factors."

SARAH PHILLIPS IS THE GUARDIAN'S FORMER JOINT DEPUTY FEATURES EDITOR

Stress and a disrupted body clock can make it harder to stick with healthy habits, while running on adrenaline makes abnormal heart beats more likely



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Disrupted Figurehead's exit plunges AI sector into chaos

By Dan Milmo

The blog headline was anodyne - "OpenAI announces leadership transition" - but the consequences for Silicon Valley were seismic.

Last Friday the company behind the hit AI text-generating system ChatGPT announced that Sam Altman, figurehead for the business and the artificial intelligence revolution that has enthralled and alarmed the world in equal measure, had been fired as chief executive.

OpenAI's non-profit board, which oversaw a commercial subsidiary run by Altman, said the 38-year-old "was not consistently candid in his communications" with its members.

Last Thursday night, Altman was invited by colleague and fellow board member Ilya Sutskever to a Google Meet call with the whole board at midday the next day.

"Ilya told Sam he was being fired and that the news was going out very soon," wrote Altman's close colleague, the OpenAI president and fellow board member Greg Brockman, on X/Twitter. Brockman was not on the call but minutes later he was also told that he was being removed from the board but would be allowed to stay at OpenAI. Brockman quit.

Altman's departure immediately kickstarted attempts to reinstate him. Satya Nadella, the chief executive of Microsoft, OpenAI's biggest investor with a 49% stake, led mediation efforts that were complicated by Altman's reported insistence that OpenAI's board be removed as a precondition for his return. The interim CEO, Mira Murati, OpenAI's chief technology officer, signalled her support for Altman's return by posting a heart emoji next to her former colleague's post on X professing love for OpenAI.

Last Saturday, OpenAI's chief strategy officer, Jason Kwon, told staff he was "optimistic" that an agreement could be struck to reverse the firing.

The following day, Altman posted a picture of himself inside OpenAI's San Francisco office wearing a guest pass - and evidently trying to negotiate his reinstatement. He wrote: "First and last time I ever wear one of these."

It appeared that OpenAI's biggest investors - including one of the world's most powerful companies - and senior staff were up against four people: the remnants of OpenAI's board. It comprised Sutskever and three non-employees: Adam D'Angelo, the founder of question-and-answer website Quora; Tasha McCauley, a tech entrepreneur; and Helen Toner,

Sam Altman at a conference in October

PATRICK T FALLON/AFP/GETTY

a director at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

Despite his array of supporters, Altman did not return. The OpenAI board appointed Emmett Shear, the co-founder of the video streaming service Twitch, as interim CEO. Soon after, Nadella announced that Microsoft had hired Altman and Brockman to lead a new advanced AI research team.

Early this week it remained unclear what exactly Altman was accused of not being candid about. Shear wrote on X that Altman - who has reportedly been talking to Apple's former design chief Jony Ive about building a new AI hardware device - had not been pushed out because of any safety concerns over the pace of AI development.

Nadella said Microsoft remained "committed to our partnership with OpenAI", which has resulted in OpenAI's models being embedded in Microsoft products such as its Bing search engine, with the unusual consequence that OpenAI's former leader is now a senior figure at the San Francisco company's biggest shareholder.

Last Sunday, OpenAI staff posted heart emojis next to re-posts of Altman's message on X stating that he loves the OpenAI team "so much" - a gesture that has been interpreted as a willingness to join their former CEO at his next venture.

That snowballed into threats of a mass resignation on Monday, when 550 of OpenAI's 700 staff warned in an open letter they could quit if the board did not reinstate Altman and Brockman - and step down themselves.

One AI company executive said they expected Microsoft and others to poach OpenAI staff "as aggressively as they can". The executive added: "There is exactly one team in the world that has built GPT-4 [the model behind ChatGPT]. And now that team is going to be torn apart."

For Altman, one thing has not changed: he remains determined to build artificial general intelligence, the term for an AI system that can perform an array of tasks at a level above or beyond human intelligence. For the many experts and tech professionals seeking a slowdown in AI development, it means events over the past few days have changed little.

As Altman wrote on Monday morning: "The mission continues."

DAN MILMO IS THE GUARDIAN'S GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY EDITOR

'One team built the model behind ChatGPT. Now that team is going to be torn apart'
AI executive

ARGENTINA

Trump and Bolsonaro hail Milei's victory as far right rejoices

By Tom Phillips RIO DE JANEIRO,
Josefina Salomón and
Facundo Iglesia BUENOS AIRES

Luminaries of the global far right are in raptures over Javier Milei's thumping election victory in Argentina, which experts predict will turn Buenos Aires into a new stomping ground for the populist radical right.

Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro led the merrymaking after their Argentinian ally trounced his rival, the Peronist finance minister Sergio Massa, by nearly 3m votes in last Sunday's presidential election. The former US president predicted Milei would "truly make Argentina great again" while Brazil's ex-president applauded a victory for "honesty, progress and freedom". Bolsonarista and Mileísta activists predicted Milei's win would be the first in a trio of rightwing conquests that would see Trump and Bolsonaro reclaim power in 2024 and 2026.

In his first post-victory interview on Monday, Milei announced he would travel to the US and Israel - where he has promised to move Argentina's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem - before being sworn in on 10 December, alongside his ultra-conservative vice-president elect Victoria Villarruel.

Bolsonaro announced he would attend Milei's inauguration in Buenos Aires and posted footage of a pally video call with Argentina's president-elect. "I'm really happy," Bolsonaro told the radical libertarian economist. "You have a big job ahead of you... and it's a job that goes beyond Argentina."

Unlike Bolsonaro, a professional politician who posed as an anti-establishment outsider, Milei is a genuine

newcomer to politics. Born in Buenos Aires in 1970, he played in a Rolling Stones cover band and found fame as a foul-mouthed economic pundit on television before being elected to congress in 2021 for his libertarian party Libertad Avanza (Freedom Advances). Milei's mercurial personality has cemented his reputation as "El Loco" (The Madman).

Other ultra-conservative figures voiced delight at Milei's landslide victory, by 14.47m to 11.51m votes.

André Ventura, the leader of Portugal's far-right Chega! (Enough!), celebrated Milei's "struggle to defend society" and Matteo Salvini, the leader of Italy's far-right League, sent his congratulations. Santiago Abascal, the leader of Spain's far-right party Vox, said Milei had opened "a path of future and hope". Hungary's president Katalin Novák congratulated Milei on a "great victory".

As rightwing tributes poured in, the scale of Milei's victory became clear. He beat his Peronist rival in 21 of Argentina's 23 provinces and came within a whisker of winning in Buenos Aires, a Peronist stronghold. In Córdoba, where Milei held his final campaign rally, the wild-haired libertarian trashed his rival by 74.28% to 25.71%.

Yet experts cautioned against viewing Milei's election as a sign of a major shift in Argentinian politics. Yanina Welp, a political scientist from the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, said culture-war issues and identity politics may have influenced

some citizens, but voters mostly wanted to punish the Peronists for leading Argentina into one of its worst economic crises in decades.

"The country has [nearly] 150% inflation and almost half of the country is living in poverty. So it's quite easy to understand the rejection of the status quo," Welp said.

That burning desire for change was writ large around Buenos Aires's iconic Obelisk on Sunday night, as thousands of Milei voters gathered.

One reveller, Marcelo Álvarez, trumpeted Milei's win as a deserved repudiation of the self-serving politicians he blamed for ruining millions of lives. "They left people with nothing and now we have won," the 60-year-old small business owner beamed.

Even so, Álvarez was unsure what the future might hold under Milei, a notoriously erratic political neophyte. Milei's plans include abolishing the central bank, dollarising the economy and deep austerity measures that many economists fear could further exacerbate Argentina's crisis.

"Things will either get better soon or they will really go to shit," Álvarez predicted as the street party raged. "I hope we didn't get it wrong and come back here to protest in two years."

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Lili Bayer in Brussels and Sam Jones in Madrid also contributed to this report

▼ Javier Milei beat his rival Sergio Massa by nearly 3m votes

NATALIA PISARENKO/AP

21

The number of Argentina's 23 provinces that were taken by Javier Milei, who also came close to beating opponent Sergio Massa in the Peronist stronghold of Buenos Aires





In 2019, the Dutch government launched a crackdown on farm emissions. The fury

Nitrogen wars

By Paul Tullis



unleashed offers a warning about protecting the environment without losing trust

1

T WAS THE WORST TRAFFIC JAM IN THE HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS. From Amsterdam to Eindhoven, Rotterdam to Roermond, more than 2,000 tractors lumbered along clogged highways during the morning rush hour of 1 October 2019. Their spinning beacon lights shining amber through the dark and the rain, they caused more than 1,000km of backups on their way to the seat of government in The Hague. Other tractors made their way slowly through the sand of North Sea beaches. They converged at the Malieveld, a park close to parliament and the primary royal residence, and a traditional scene of protest. Authorities had said that only 75 tractors would be allowed in the park, but wanting to avoid a direct confrontation, they quickly lifted the restriction. Within hours, 2,200 tractors would be squeezed in, parked front grille to trailer hitch.

The farmers had gathered to protest against an announcement the previous week. An advisory committee, chaired by the former deputy prime minister Johan Remkes, had declared that the government would need to take “drastic measures” to reduce emissions of

nitrogen, a formidable contributor to pollution worldwide. By far the largest share of nitrogen deposited on Dutch land comes from agriculture, so these measures would need to involve, according to the committee’s report, buying out and shutting livestock farms. The report – titled, with a very Dutch combination of understatement and candour, *Not Everything Is Possible* – did not make clear whether these buyouts would be voluntary or forced. Farmers assumed the worst.

A few tractors broke through fences that had been erected around the Malieveld, and three people were arrested. Otherwise the scene was peaceful. Barbecues were lit and music played. A few enterprising food vendors brought their trailers and did a brisk business selling chips. Signs proclaimed, in English, “No farmers no food”, and “How dairy you”, and in Dutch, “Proud of the farmer”.

Anje Grin, who raises 250 dairy cows on a large farm near the centre of the country, drove her tractor to the protest with one of her employees. “The atmosphere was very nice,” she told me recently. Her husband, Piet, stayed home to look after the farm. “Someone has to stay behind,” he said. “Otherwise I think the demonstration could have been twice the size.”

Remkes's announcement did not come out of nowhere. Within the 27 member states of the EU, there are a number of specially protected nature reserves, known as the Natura 2000 network. In the summer of 2019, the Dutch council of state, the country's highest administrative court, had ruled that the Netherlands' nitrogen permits system was failing to prevent emissions harming these reserves within its borders, and it needed to end immediately. At the time, this ruling didn't seem like such a big deal. Major newspapers covered it on page five, or page nine. Alex Datema, who heads the agricultural division of Rabobank, the Netherlands' second-largest bank, told me that it took dairy farmers "a few months to realise what it meant".

When the Remkes report hit, everyone woke up. Agriculture was responsible for 80% of emissions of one form of nitrogen pollution, and the report said the largest share was coming from dairy farming. But dairy accounted for just 1% of GDP. Maybe, the logic went, cutting back on production wouldn't be such a great sacrifice for the country.

This enraged farmers, who in many cases were already feeling mistreated. They had already reduced their nitrogen emissions by almost two-thirds since 1990, mainly through technical advances. Over the same period, government services in rural areas had been cut in favour of investment in cities. And for more than half a century, government policies had encouraged farms to expand, saddling farmers with debts; now they were being told to do the opposite. "A lot had the feeling that the government betrayed them," Datema said.

In the days and weeks after the rally at the Malieveld, more demonstrations took place, and rhetoric grew fiercer. Protesters broke down the door of the provincial government in Groningen, a university town surrounded by farmland. A leader of the far-right Farmers' Defence Force, one of the groups that organised protests, declared that the cabinet wanted "civil war", an accusation that amounted to a threat.

As strange as it sounds, the government's failure to develop a workable political solution to the problem of excess nitrogen has shaken Dutch politics to its foundations. In the Netherlands, it is known simply as the *stikstofcrisis*, the nitrogen crisis. An environmental reform that, at first glance, seemed to affect only a small proportion of Dutch society has somehow become not only wildly controversial in its own right, but embroiled in a web of related and unrelated issues, grievances and conspiracy theories. In 2019, prime minister Mark Rutte called it the "fiercest crisis" he had faced as leader, and improbably, it has attracted attention around the world. In the summer of 2022, Donald Trump gave a speech in which he celebrated the Dutch farmers for "courageously opposing the climate tyranny of the Dutch government".



Hit the road

The 2019 farmers' protests involved more than 2,000 tractors

HOLLANDSE HOOGTE / REX / SHUTTERSTOCK; SIESE VEENSTRA / ANP / AFP / GETTY

The US rightwing website Breitbart praised the farmers' resistance against a "green agenda", and demonstrators in Canada, angry at Covid travel restrictions, waved Dutch flags.

In the Netherlands, far-right groups have seized on the chaos, using the issue to push their own agendas, and two new right-leaning parties (though holding, in a manner peculiar to Dutch politics, leftish elements) - the populist Farmer-Citizen Movement (known by its Dutch initials, BBB) and the centrist New Social Contract - has been polling well in rural areas. Political discontent that coalesced around the nitrogen issue could well have determined the outcome of this week's general election.

The nitrogen crisis is a story about the political consequences of ignoring a problem for fear of antagonising an important interest group, then fumbling the response when it becomes clear that doing nothing is no longer tenable. And other countries should take note. France, Italy, Germany and Belgium also have Natura 2000 areas that overlap with intensive livestock farming, and those governments must eventually tackle nitrogen emissions, too. More broadly, as the *stikstofcrisis* shows, if policymakers cannot devise effective political solutions to urgent environmental problems, they will find themselves in a double bind: watching the natural world fall apart around them, as political upheaval spreads.

AT SOME POINT IN SCHOOL, you probably learned that humans need oxygen to breathe. You may then have been surprised, somewhere between school and reading this article, to discover that each breath we take contains far more nitrogen than oxygen. Nitrogen accounts for 78% of the Earth's atmosphere, and it is perhaps even more surprising that such an abundant element could be one of the greatest sources of pollution worldwide - believed by some to be, after climate change, the most serious environmental challenge we face.

The nitrogen in the atmosphere is, on its own, harmless. But when it reacts with other elements, it can form more unstable compounds, such as ammonia or nitrogen dioxide. Small amounts of both have always been found in the environment, but thanks to human activity over the past 75 years, emissions of the two gases have rocketed. Burning fossil fuels emits nitrogen dioxide, which pollutes sky, land and sea and causes, among other health problems, asthma in children.

Another contributor to our global nitrogen problem is the way we farm. In the second half of the 20th century, around the same





'Farmers want to know they'll still have a good income in 10 or 15 years. They're looking for a sustainable future'

time that nitrogen dioxide-emitting cars, planes, power plants and factories proliferated, chemical fertilisers containing nitrogen began to be widely used. Such ammonia-based fertilisers helped to massively improve grain yields. But crops typically don't absorb all the fertiliser they're given, because it's hard to know exactly the right amount to apply. So the excess ammonia runs off into waterways, causing a chain of chemical reactions that decrease oxygen levels in the water and result in "dead zones", where fish can't live. As fish populations plummet, coastal economies suffer, too.

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BYOND NITROGEN-RICH FERTILISERS and burning fossil fuels, there is another key source of nitrogen pollution. Intensive livestock farming contributes significantly to the increase in ammonia. If you crowd too many cows into a field, they'll eat all the grass before it can grow back. So farmers prefer to put them in barns and feed them concentrated proteins such as soy, which are between 13% and 19% nitrogen. This has increased milk and beef yields, but again, with environmental costs. A cow's digestive system didn't evolve to absorb so much nitrogen-containing protein, so the animals excrete a large amount of it. When the animal's urine and faeces combine, they form ammonia. As with nitrogen dioxide, ammonia floats into the atmosphere, spreading pollution.

These effects cascade. An excess of nitrogen in the soil sets off a chain reaction that depletes the soil's calcium. Snails use calcium to form their shells. No calcium, no snails. Snails are, in turn, a crucial source of calcium for birds. Without it, when fledglings try to stand in the nest for the first time, their legs break. That means they won't grow up to spread fertiliser or seeds through their waste, a process crucial for maintaining forests. Nor - bringing the effects of nitrogen pollution back to farms - will these birds consume insects and rodents that devour crops. Everyone - plants, animals, humans - loses.

Anje and Piet Grin rise well before dawn every morning, don coveralls or trousers, go downstairs, pull on a pair of wellies left by the kitchen door, and head out to their two barns. It's a lifestyle that still holds a firm grip on the Dutch imagination. Even today, many city people have parents or grandparents who are or were farmers, and cherish childhood memories of romping about in open fields under skies out of an old master's landscape painting. In the 20th century, "cities were developed with the idea of integration with the countryside, to give people plenty of fresh air because they don't have many big parks", said Geert Mak, who has written several books on Dutch history and culture. More than in many other developed nations, city and country people in the Netherlands have stayed connected, physically and culturally.

Harold Zoet, who raises Welsh ponies and was elected in March to the provincial council of Gelderland on the BBB slate, sees the nitrogen crisis as a manifestation of an emerging divide between urban and rural Dutch. In the Netherlands, and across the world, rural communities have been hollowed out by urbanisation, the mechanisation of farming and plummeting grain prices; and they've felt overlooked by politicians perceived to be part of an urban elite. "People don't understand what it is to work on the land," Zoet told me. As people feel bad about their increasing separation from nature, he believes, they seek policies to protect it, but are oblivious to how those policies affect rural communities.

The Grins' farm, an hour's drive from Amsterdam, was first owned by Piet's parents, who had 30 or 40 cows along with some crops. When

Anje and Piet took over in 1984, they ditched the crops and expanded to 100 cows. In 2012 they expanded again to 250, housing them in a new, state-of-the-art barn designed to limit the amount of nitrogen that gets into the atmosphere. Ever since, they've been selling their cows' milk mostly to a cheesemaker in Germany, 60km to the east.

The Grins are in their mid-60s, and none of their five children is interested in taking over the family business. They want to sell the farm and move to a smaller property nearby where they currently keep a few cattle and tend sugar beets. Theirs is a physically demanding job. "It's very intense," Piet said. "There's a moment when you decide it's enough."

The Grins' farm is what's known as a *piekbelaster* - it's on the government's list of 3,000 businesses that "cause the most nitrogen precipitation on overburdened nitrogen-sensitive Natura 2000 areas". That makes them eligible to be bought out by the government. The buyout programme is voluntary, but it doesn't feel that way to the Grins. "What does that mean when you are standing in the corner with the gun pointed at you?" Anje wrote on Facebook in August.

The couple have poured their lives into their farm, and it's their chief asset. But they can't continue as they are, and they cannot sell the farm to a private buyer, because the government will not grant a permit that guarantees that the new owner can continue farming. Without that permit, banks won't grant a loan to any potential buyer. They feel their only option is to accept the government buyout, but that would mean accepting that the barn would be torn down, the animals sold, their life's work erased.

As part of their retirement plan, the Grins hope to raise a small number of cattle for sale. But they've been told that it's a condition of the buyout programme that sellers no longer farm. They worry that even a few cattle would violate this condition.

"Farmers want to know they'll still have a good income in 10 or 15 years," Zoet said. "They're looking for a sustainable future." The Grins, among others, say they can't see it.

Before he became the head of Rabobank's agricultural division in May, Alex Datema was a dairy farmer. He still co-owns the operation where his grandfather raised cows, and his family's story encapsulates the history of Dutch farming over the past 75 years.

In the 1950s, the Netherlands was still recovering from five years of Nazi occupation and the famine that gripped the nation in the final winter of the war. Many of the population were subsistence farmers, with a few cows, a few chickens, some crops, and maybe a pig. Sicco Mansholt, the agriculture minister, decided that the Netherlands could leave behind poverty and hunger by producing enough food to feed itself, rather than relying on imports. Under his proposals, a certain number of farmers would specialise in one product and expand their business, while the government would pay other, smaller farmers to quit. This would mean both that more food could be produced and that the remaining farmers would earn more.

Mansholt's policies did not pay off immediately. In 1960, GDP per capita still barely exceeded \$1,000, nearly 40% less than in the UK. But gradually the plan began to work. The number of Dutch farms plummeted - in 1950, there were 410,000 farms among 10 million Dutch people, while today there are only 55,000 in a population of nearly 18 million - and those that remained became increasingly productive. Since 1984, the number of cows per farm has more than doubled.

Datema's father and uncle took advantage of subsidies implemented under Mansholt to build new barns, where more cows could be kept on less land. Their herd doubled and they bought concentrates such as soy to feed them more efficiently. Although Dutch





The government's attempt at a 'targeted' approach made some farmers feel just that – as if they had targets on their backs

farming thrived, farmers did not have it easy: today many operate on low margins and under heavy debt burdens. “Farmers were more or less forced to expand and intensify, because margins on their produce shrank and the banks that financed them also demanded growth and intensification,” said Caspar van den Berg, a professor of public administration at the University of Groningen.

By 1990, the environmental effects of Mansholt’s policies were also becoming clear. A government commission into the country’s compliance with its nitrogen emissions targets stated that much more needed to be done. The commission acknowledged that nitrogen reductions would create a drop in income for dairy farmers: a typical farm would lose 10,000 guilders a year (about \$5,600 today), or about 20% of per capita GDP at the time.

3 N

O ONE WANTED TO HEAR THIS. Since the 1980s, the Netherlands’ coalition governments have almost always included the Christian Democratic Appeal party, which has particular support in rural areas. The party’s leader would almost reflexively be appointed to head the agriculture ministry, which was heavily staffed by the sons of farmers. Despite the 1990 commission, the Christian Democrats successfully kept the issue off the table, and the government continued to encourage farmers to invest and expand.

Dairy production jumped further between 2008 and 2015, as the EU phased out its limits on the amount of milk that individual farmers could supply. By 2020, the Netherlands was home to 3.8 million cows, 11.9 million pigs and 90.2 million chickens, giving it the densest livestock population in Europe by far.

Farmers knew, Datema told me, that perhaps one day they’d have to do more to reduce nitrogen emissions. “But most of them thought, well, if there’s legislation, we’ll do it – but nobody’s really talking about it, besides environmental groups.” Then, suddenly, in 2019, everyone was talking about it.

If the farmers who had driven their tractors to the Malieveld had hoped for a softening of the “drastic measures” that Remkes had declared necessary, they were to be disappointed. In June 2020, eight months after the tractor protest, Remkes held a press conference where he released his final report, with Carola Schouten, the agriculture minister, smiling beside him. Nitrogen emissions would need to be halved within the decade.

The brutality of Remkes’s demand was the consequence of years of inaction. “We knew for a long time about the effect of nitrogen on certain habitats,” Zoet said. “It’s never good to address in such a short term something that built up over a long time.”

To many, the government’s proposals to halve emissions seem both harsh and unworkable; €975m (\$1bn) was set aside to buy out *piekbelasters* like the Grins, and another €500m to buy and close down other nitrogen-emitting farms. The funds were to come from a pot of €25bn for nature restoration, including nitrogen-emissions reduction. But when the cabinet asked the regional governments to come up with nitrogen plans for their own territory, those plans added up to €58bn.

“If we had started with good legislation 10 years ago,” Datema said, “it would have been much, much easier to solve the problem than it is now.”

The October 2019 protest on the Malieveld didn’t catch the attention of the far right. The first appearance at a farmers’ protest by Forum for Democracy (FvD), a far-right political party, came four months

after the tractor jam. Then Covid hit, and the FvD turned its attention to campaigning against pandemic restrictions and vaccines. But as those restrictions eased and vaccines took effect, and as the farmers’ protests grew more violent, the FvD saw an opening. “Farmer issues lend themselves well to far-right ideology – nostalgia for the past, also their connection to the old Nazi theme of ‘blood & soil’, creating room for the pure white people, all that creepy fascist stuff,” said Léonie de Jonge, a political scientist at the University of Groningen.

As the government scrambled to come up with ways to reduce nitrogen emissions, those on the far right, as well as some politicians and farmer activists, tried to undermine any proposals. In May 2020, the agriculture minister proposed limits on the protein content of animal feed. Her opponents insisted that this would lead to cows producing less milk and a resulting decrease in farmer income. They ignored the fact that, as the minister’s press release pointed out, cattle are generally fed more protein than they need, and that the proposed limits were carefully chosen so that milk yields would not suffer.

Conspiracy theorists seized on another part of the press release. Noting the contribution of housing and infrastructure to nitrogen emissions, it stated that “the government considers it important that the licensing of housing construction … does not come to a halt”. This statement seems to have been the basis for the idea, which took off on social media, that the government planned to replace Dutch farms with apartment buildings that would be used to house migrants from Turkey and the Middle East. A former FvD candidate was invited on to Tucker Carlson’s Fox News programme, where she repeated this same conspiracy theory. (She wore a red bandana, a symbol of support for the protesters, tied around her neck.)

In 2022, as discontent with the government intensified, protesters showed up at the home of Christianne van der Wal, the new minister for nature and nitrogen policy (the element had been given its own cabinet post). Confronting the men in her driveway, she told them: “My children are inside shaking.” Undeterred, the protesters attacked a police van that had been sent to protect her.

THIS YEAR, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR HAVE DETERIORATED FURTHER. In June, the largest farmers’ union dropped out of negotiations for an agreement over nitrogen policy, blaming the government’s intransigence. By then, the far right had successfully linked it to the refugee problem. Some municipalities wanted to select the nationality of refugees relocated in their communities.

In July, cabinet discussions over reforms to immigration policy collapsed. In what many commentators saw as an attempt to appease the right, Rutte argued for tougher restrictions for asylum seekers that would have put the country’s immigration policy in contravention of European law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. None of the other parties in the coalition agreed to his proposals. The cabinet talks ground to a halt, and Rutte announced the dissolution of his cabinet.

A few days later, Rutte said he would not stand for re-election in November. After 13 years in power, he planned to quit politics.

It doesn’t take an expert in public policy to recognise that the Dutch government has made a mess of the nitrogen issue. Remkes’s recommendation for a “targeted” approach made *piekbelasters* such as the Grins feel just that – as if they had targets on their backs.

What could the government have done differently? The dairy industry would like to see more pressure on other sources of nitrogen. While the vast majority of current ammonia emissions in the

Netherlands are produced by agriculture, 67% of nitrogen dioxide emissions comes from vehicles, and 24% from industry and energy production. "The farms are really under the microscope," Zoet told me. "I think the government should do more to make other businesses responsible." But Remkes's report was clear that nitrogen reduction was not only necessary for farmers. It also targeted the construction industry - another major nitrogen emitter - and proposed other measures, such as lowering the motorway speed limit.

Benjamin Bodirsky, an agricultural economist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, suggested to me that the government could simply tax farmers on the amount of nitrogen they emit. This would both incentivise farmers to emit less nitrogen, and allow them to reduce emissions in the way that suits them best.

Others see technology as the way forward. Zoet is enthusiastic about a new system developed by a Dutch company called Lely, which makes robotic farm equipment. This system separates cattle's waste streams in the barn so that they form less ammonia, then turns much of the ammonia that is formed into fertiliser that the farmer can apply to their own fields with greater precision, so that it doesn't harm protected areas. The company says the system reduces ammonia emissions by 70%. Farmers could also add enzymes to feed that helps cows absorb more of the nitrogen that they eat.

Yet Natasja Oerlemans, head of food and agriculture at WWF Netherlands, dismisses such notions as sticking plasters. "We need a total rethink of the system," she said. She and others point out that it's wildly inefficient to give cattle food such as soy, which is suitable for humans, or to raise them on the kind of land that could instead be producing crops. And if consumers ate more plants, and less meat and dairy, ammonia and greenhouse gas emissions would drop.

There may be no proposal that will satisfy dairy farmers. Any solution for reducing emissions will require fewer farms, or existing farms to function differently, or both. No solution can guarantee incomes will be unaffected. As environmental protections become more urgent, it is likely that some people will simply have to change the way they work, just as others might be forced to change how they travel or cook.

But turmoil of the kind seen in the Netherlands might be avoided if politicians act with more care and empathy. Drastic measures may be needed, but it isn't necessarily helpful to frame them as such, or to place stringent demands on already struggling rural communities. How politicians choose to engage with their opponents is as important as the policies themselves - especially today, when misinformation and disinformation spread with unprecedented speed.

Under protest

Straw piled outside a provincial government building in 2019; a rally in 2023

SIESE VEENSTRA/EPA; ANADOLU/GETTY

On 30 October, Pieter Omtzigt, leader of the centrist New Social Contract party, debated on TV with Frans Timmermans, the head of a new alliance of leftwing parties. The two men organised the event to show they could work together to lead a coalition government capable of freezing out Rutte's centre-right party after this week's election. Dutch pundits generally regarded the event as a success for both men, and for their parties.

Even if they led the votes after this week, the two will almost certainly need to pull in another party, or even two, to get to a majority. BBB, polling fifth prior to the election, is in an excellent position to play dealmaker - or spoiler.

Whatever the outcome, the next government faces a host of challenges that have become linked to the nitrogen issue. The Netherlands has 122 job openings for every 100 unemployed people; the tram service in Amsterdam has been reduced due to staff shortages, and signs outside virtually every shop seek employees. Migrants are eager to take these jobs, but the government doesn't have the capacity to process their applications to stay - and there are few places for them to live because of a nationwide housing shortage, exacerbated by the fact that 18,000 construction projects have been halted, because the government wants to restrict their nitrogen emissions. What seems to be a solution to one problem aggravates the others.

This might seem like so much local politics, but the broad contours can be recognised in political trends elsewhere, from the US to Britain to central Europe to the Indian subcontinent. The 2018 *gilets jaunes* protests in France originated among rural residents displeased with higher fuel taxes, which fell on them disproportionately because they drive more than the inhabitants of cities. Populist politicians are well placed to pick up votes from segments of society that feel abandoned or discriminated against by the government. Van den Berg, the Groningen professor, spoke of the drop in social cohesion in the Netherlands, with public services, public transport and healthcare provisions whittled away in many rural areas. He thinks voters in those places are jumping from one party to another, desperate for anybody to come along and say the government is the problem. On 5 November, Timmermans said he no longer thought it necessary to stick to the current government's goal to halve nitrogen emissions by 2030.

Though they have been Christian Democrat supporters most of their lives, this week the Grins filled in their ballot for the BBB ●

PAUL TULLIS IS A JOURNALIST BASED IN AMSTERDAM





THE SECRET SERVICE AGENT HAUNTED BY **JFK'S** **SHOOTING**

Clint Hill flung himself on to the president's limousine in a desperate attempt to block any further bullets on that fateful day in Dallas 60 years ago, and spent decades wrestling with lingering feelings of guilt and shame

By David Smith | Portrait by Peter Prato





T HAS BECOME A CLICHE THAT EVERYONE OF A CERTAIN AGE COULD TELL YOU where they were when they heard President John F Kennedy was dead. Clint Hill spent decades trying to forget.

The Secret Service agent was in the Dallas motorcade as a member of the first lady's detail when Kennedy was assassinated on 22 November 1963. Hill leaped on to the back of the presidential limousine to use his body to shield the Kennedys from any additional shots.

For a long time he remained silent, stalked by guilt and gnawed by doubts that he could have done more to save the president. He drank himself into depression before turning his life around. In recent years he has published memoirs, taken part in public forums and, at 91, is the most prominent living link to the day that, in his telling, America lost its innocence.

But 60 years on, Hill fears that the last surviving witnesses will take the truth of the assassination to their graves. In an age of division, disinformation and internet-fuelled movements such as QAnon, conspiracy theories about who killed Kennedy and why are thriving as never before.

"It concerns me a great deal," says Hill, who addresses the issue in the afterword of a new edition of his book, *Five Days in November*, "because there aren't many of us left - very, very few - and eventually, the way things have been going, those conspiracy theories are going to win out and take over, and then you won't have any factual information about what happened on November 22nd, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, and that's a shame."

"It should be documented, it should be factual, not conspiratorial, and that's why I wrote the book because I wanted to make sure everybody who wants to has an opportunity to get the facts about November 22nd, 1963, and not be just part of a conspiratorial theoretical group."

The official account holds that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination but unproven conspiracy theories include claims of a second gunman and the involvement of organised crime or the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Hill was appalled by Oliver Stone's Hollywood film *JFK*, which in 1991 helped popularise the "magic bullet theory", and by Stone's follow-up documentary two years ago.

He has lived to see Donald Trump suggest that the father of the Republican senator Ted Cruz was somehow involved and QAnon followers gather at the scene of the crime in the belief that Kennedy or his son John F Kennedy Jr - who died in a plane crash in

1999 - would appear alive to announce Trump's reinstatement as president with Kennedy Jr as vice-president. Robert Kennedy Jr has claimed that the CIA was involved in his uncle's murder and is now running for president himself.

Hill dismisses it all with the weary indignation of an Apollo astronaut insisting that yes, he really did land on the moon. "Conspiracies are nothing more than theories," he says, wearing spectacles, red shirt and sleeveless cream vest, and speaking via Zoom from his home in Belvedere, California. "They're not fact."

Hill was born in North Dakota in 1932, worked in counterintelligence for the US army and joined the Secret Service as a special agent in 1958. When he was assigned to protect the first lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, his heart sank. He had witnessed the fate of other agents detailed to first ladies such as Bess Truman or Mamie Eisenhower - an unexciting life of shopping and card games such as canasta.

"But it wasn't like that with Mrs Kennedy," he recalls. "She was an athlete. She liked to play tennis. She played golf. She was an excellent swimmer. She water-skied. She rode horses - she was a really great equestrian. She had a real sense of history and she was so smart. She could speak French, she could speak Spanish, she could speak Italian and she used it to help the president in many ways."

What does Hill remember about the couple? "We saw them up close and personal 24/7 so we knew what they liked, what they didn't like, everything about them. But we also knew what the relationship was like. They did not express in public the feelings that they made visible in private."

But that changed in August 1963 when Jacqueline Kennedy gave birth to a boy, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, who died two days later of respiratory distress syndrome. "They were both very depressed because they had really looked forward to this young boy. After that they didn't seem to care what the public thought. They held hands in public, they embraced in public. They let their guard down from that point of view in public and it was nice to see how close they were. They really loved each other. They didn't care if people saw that they were actually two lovers."

This might help explain why Jacqueline, who tried to stay out of politics and had not travelled with her husband on a domestic political trip before, decided to join him in Texas for the unofficial start of his 1964 re-election campaign. Kennedy had won the state by just 2% in 1960 but the couple drew huge crowds. Hill recalls Air Force One landing at Dallas Love Field airport and Kennedy's open-topped

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limousine heading into the city, where he was due to deliver a major speech at the Trade Mart.

"As we got into the heart of the city down on Main Street, the crowd was so large they could not be contained on the sidewalk," he says. "They were into the street. People were on top of buildings. They were hanging out of windows. They were on external fire escapes. Any place that they could get their body to that would give them an advantage to see the president, Mrs Kennedy, the vice-president, Mr Johnson, the [Texas] governor [John Connally] and Mrs Connally in this motorcade is what they were going to do, and that's what they did."

WITH HILL ON THE RUNNING BOARD OF THE CAR BEHIND the Kennedys, the motorcade travelled a 16km route that wound through downtown Dallas and turned off Main Street at Dealey Plaza, beneath the Texas School Book Depository building, where Oswald was perched on the sixth floor. As he recalls what happened next, his voice holding steady, it as if six decades have melted away and Hill is back there in the sunshine, the crowds, the explosion of violence.

"I was scanning the area to my left, which is a grassy area, and the overpass that we were going to have to go under and I saw nothing

► Camelot's end

Crowds watch as the motorcade travels through Dallas (left); Clint Hill on the presidential limousine (below)

BETTMANN ARCHIVE;
ALAMY

that would cause any concern. All of a sudden I heard this explosive noise over my right shoulder. I turned my head, started looking toward the right, but only got as far as the back of the presidential vehicle and I saw the president grabbing his throat and starting to fall to his left. I knew then that he apparently had been shot."

Hill jumped from his position on the follow-up car and ran towards the presidential vehicle but, as he approached, he "felt" the third shot hit Kennedy in the head. "It entered lower on the back of the head and blew out a section of his skull just behind and above the right ear.

"With that came blood, bone fragments, brain material. Mrs Kennedy then started to get up on the trunk: she was trying to reach some of that material that had come out of the president's head. I grabbed hold of her when I got up on top of the car and helped her get back into the back seat. When I did that, the president's body fell further to its left and his head ended up in her lap." →

He continues in a steady voice: "I got up on the back of the



top of the trunk and lay there forming a barrier so that nothing further could injure them. But I looked down and I saw the condition the president was in. There was a massive hole in the skull area: there was nothing there, no brain material.

"When Mrs Kennedy went up in the back, she actually did get some piece of that material and had it in her hands. I looked down and there was just no way I thought the president could survive this and I turned and gave a thumbs down to my fellow agents in a follow-up car and screamed at the driver of the president's car to get to a hospital."

The motorcade raced to Dallas's Parkland Memorial hospital. Hill clung to the car with his left hand and one of his feet. On arrival at the hospital, Jacqueline would not let go of her husband's body. Hill recalls: "I said, 'Please, Mrs Kennedy, let us help the president.' I got no response. I said it again and got no response. I'd been with her for a little over three years. I knew her pretty well and I realised she didn't want anybody to see the condition he was in so I took off my suit coat and I covered up his head and his upper back and, when I did that, she just let go."

The president was taken to trauma room one where doctors tried to save his life. But it was a futile exercise. Kennedy, 46, the youngest elected president in American history, was dead, along with the era of "Camelot". Hill was instructed to order a casket.

"The nurses removed all his clothing, wrapped him in sheets and placed him within the casket. We then proceeded to leave the area of trauma room one and went out to where the hearse was. Mrs Kennedy walked behind the casket. I was with her. I said to her, Mrs Kennedy, 'We could ride in a car right behind the hearse.' She said, 'Mr Hill, no, I'm going to ride in the back with the president.'"

The sad procession arrived back at Love Field. Hill helped carry the heavy casket up the steps to the rear of Air Force One but it was too wide to fit through the door. "We had to break the handles off to get it through the door and get it into the confines of Air Force One. The air crew had removed the seats from an area within the back of the aircraft so that we could place the casket there. Mrs Kennedy sat then in the rear of the aircraft adjacent to the casket."

Lyndon Johnson was sworn in as president with Jacqueline at his side, still wearing the pink suit that was stained with her husband's blood ("Let them see what they've done," she said).

Hill continued to protect Jacqueline and her children until the end of 1964, served Presidents Johnson, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and received the nation's highest civilian award for bravery.



But he was haunted by that day in Dallas and whether, had he reached the presidential limousine a second earlier, he might have been able to take the third shot to his own body.

He recalls: "From that point on, my life changed. Before that day, before I attempted to put my body up on top of the car to protect President Kennedy and Mrs Kennedy, I was just Clint Hill. But afterward, because of photographs and the Zapruder film [a colour sequence made by Abraham Zapruder with a home-movie camera], I was no longer just Clint Hill. I was that guy that got on to the back of the presidential vehicle and I went through life from that point on with that being said about me and of me.

"It has bothered me a great deal. I had a serious guilt complex about not being able to help him more than I did and that just grew and grew and grew from that point on."

HILL FAILED THE SECRET SERVICE'S PHYSICAL EXAM IN 1975 AND WAS FORCED INTO RETIREMENT. He gave one TV interview and then sank into a deep depression. "I went in so deep that you wouldn't even know me, probably. I didn't want to see anybody, didn't want to talk to anybody. I couldn't sleep so I drank scotch heavily and smoked two packs a day. By 1982 my friend, who was a doctor, came to me and said, 'Clint, either you quit living the way you have been living or you're going to die very soon.' I thought about it and I decided I wanted to live so I quit smoking and I quit drinking cold turkey, which was very difficult."

The feelings of guilt and shame lingered into old age but then he found a talking cure. In 2009 a friend and former agent asked for Hill's help on a book, leading to a meeting with journalist Lisa McCubbin in Washington. They talked for two hours and she asked for his number in case she had any follow-up questions; they began speaking weekly, then daily, and became friends. McCubbin encouraged him to take part in a TV documentary with other former agents - the first time they had talked about the assassination among themselves.

Hill and McCubbin have co-authored books including *Mrs Kennedy and Me* and *Five Days in November* - and they married in 2021. Today she sits in on Hill's interview with the Guardian, occasionally repeating questions for his benefit or giving gentle prompts to tease out extra memories while lamenting the choppiness of the Zoom connection. The couple are in a home office adorned by books, framed family photos, an Apollo 10 memento and a poster for the new book.

With each book and each speaking engagement, Hill has found it easier to deal with history and his part in it. "I seem to feel better after every event," he reflects. "I guess that's because what I was suffering was PTSD. I did not know it at the time but that's what it was. I can now talk about it, like I have here. I still have emotional feelings about it but it's much more easily discussed than it had been in the past."

Kennedy was the fourth and still the last US president to be assassinated, although Ronald Reagan narrowly survived an attempt on his life in 1981. Hill expresses the fervent wish that no more acts of violence be seared into the American consciousness - and that agents are never again tormented by losing a man or woman on their watch.

"Undoubtedly the Secret Service has improved tremendously since that time," he says. "I pray for these agents working there every night. Please Lord, watch over them." ●

DAVID SMITH IS THE GUARDIAN'S WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

MARTHA GILL

Social media
and the rise of
boasting

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Opinion



ISRAEL/PALESTINE

*We must see the true nature
of Hamas - and of Netanyahu*

Jonathan Freedland



Know thine enemy - and know thine ally, too. Too many of those pushing for one outcome or another in the war between Israel and Hamas misjudge the parties involved. They make mistaken assumptions about one side or the other - or both - that lead them to draw flawed, even dangerous, conclusions. There is no monopoly on these mistaken assumptions. They can be made by those calling on western leaders to demand an immediate ceasefire - and by the very western leaders they seek to persuade.

Start with those who look at the havoc wreaked in Gaza - at the many thousands killed, at the pile of rubble that was once Palestine's largest city - and decide that, whatever horrors Hamas committed on 7 October, surely it has now sustained enough of a blow; given all that Gaza has suffered, surely now Hamas will be deterred from future attacks. Such thinking fundamentally misunderstands the nature of that organisation. Hamas is a different kind of enemy, one that does not fit the usual theories of war. It does not mind if its own people die.

Recall how counter-terrorist strategists had to rethink all they knew when first confronted with suicide bombers. It's hard to deter a terrorist who does not fear death. That's true writ large for an organisation that has explicitly said it is "proud to sacrifice martyrs". Not its own leaders, mind, many of whom live in safety and, reportedly, great luxury in Qatar and elsewhere. But the ordinary men and women of Gaza.

This is why Hamas has spent hundreds of millions of dollars - much of it international aid money - not on basic services for those living in Gaza, but on a network of underground tunnels that it has said are exclusively for its own use. As one Hamas leader put it, ordinary people in Gaza who need protection should look to the UN.

It's this that explains why, whatever truth eventually emerges about the recent role of the al-Shifa hospital, a former director of a major aid organisation operating in Gaza testified last week that "it was broadly suspected/understood as far back as 2014 that Hamas used the al-Shifa hospital complex as a command centre and base for operations" - just as it has long been understood that Hamas is not afraid to use schools or UN buildings when it comes to raining rockets down on Israel. The calculation for Hamas is that either Israel hits back, killing innocents - thereby losing legitimacy in the eyes of the world - or it does not, thereby allowing Hamas to keep firing. Either way, Hamas wins.



Netanyahu and his coalition are utterly opposed to the very arrangement Israel's western allies advocate

now thine enemy - and know thine ally, too. Too many of those pushing for one outcome or another in the war between Israel and Hamas misjudge the parties involved. They make mistaken assumptions about one side or the other - or both - that lead them to draw flawed, even dangerous, conclusions. There is no monopoly on these mistaken assumptions. They can be made by those calling on western leaders to demand an immediate ceasefire - and by the very western leaders they seek to persuade.

The ideology of violent jihadism plays a part here, and that too is often overlooked. There are plenty in the west eager to see Hamas simply as a resistance movement, in the tradition of national liberation struggles. But this fails to reckon with Hamas's doctrinal commitment. Violent jihadism is Hamas's animating creed. It truly believes that when one of its own people dies - even a child killed in an airstrike - they go to paradise as a martyr.

It is not easy to imagine an accommodation with such an adversary, certainly not one of the kind that Benjamin Netanyahu so disastrously maintained for the past 15 years. The Israeli prime minister pursued a policy of containment, described aptly by the historian Yuval Noah Harari as "violent coexistence", in which Israel believed it could just about live with Hamas in Gaza, with periodic military confrontations. That delusion was shattered on the black sabbath of last month.

Which is why the US, the European Union and other allies have reached the same conclusion as the Israeli government: that Hamas cannot merely be temporarily deterred, that this cannot simply be one more round that follows the all-too-familiar pattern in which a ceasefire is followed by a pause, allowing Hamas to regroup and rearm, ready for the next escalation. Instead, as the EU foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Hamas "must be defeated".

It's not just western governments that think this way. The dog that didn't bark - or has not yet barked - in this story is the governments of those Arab states with ties to Israel, along with Saudi Arabia, whose imminent "normalisation" deal with Israel Hamas was seemingly determined to derail. Despite all the bloodshed in Gaza, those states have not broken off relations with Israel.

Borrell also called for "a political solution" - one excluding Hamas - to bring Israelis and Palestinians back to the two-state solution. Joe Biden, Rishi Sunak and the rest say the same thing. But they, too, are guilty of misreading one of the key players - Israel's government.

For they are overlooking the fact that Netanyahu and his coalition are utterly opposed to the very arrangement Israel's western allies advocate. This is the most rightwing government in Israel's history. It includes junior ministers who fantasise about flattening Gaza with a nuclear bomb and senior

ministers who are wrecking any chance of cooperation with the only body that could plausibly fill the vacuum in a post-Hamas Gaza: the Palestinian Authority.

Netanyahu does nothing to rein them in, because he needs their parliamentary votes to stay in power - and he needs to stay in power to be sure he stays out of jail, as he is tried on corruption charges.

So Washington, Brussels and London currently back Israel because they agree that no peace is possible without the removal of Hamas. They are much less clear that no peace is possible without the removal of Netanyahu and his henchmen. Yet both can be true. Western governments, and those filling the streets to condemn them, need to be clear-eyed about the nature of their enemies - and their allies ●

Boasting permeates our online lives - but we're no happier for it

Martha Gill



Was there ever a Christmas tradition so universally despised as turning on the lights in mid-November? Well yes, actually, there was. Do you remember the round robin - the self-consciously casual family newsletter to be sent indiscriminately to cousins, ex-colleagues and strangers met on holiday?

Those double-sided sheets of A4 first fluttered out of Christmas cards some time in the mid-1980s, around the point that the home computer began conquering the world. Boasting, once costly and laborious, could suddenly be mass produced. Jenny and Crispin's two weeks skiing in the Dolomites, Ed's promotion, Margot's 10 A*s - all this could be broadcast widely, along with a photo of the family in identical snowflake jumpers.

Oh, how we laughed at these deluded solipsists. Up sprang a cottage industry of symbiotic traditions, from humorous festive readings to drubbings in the press. My late colleague Simon Hoggart used to collect the best of the round robins in a yearly column, including this gem: "We had a heavenly nine days in Toulouse... Toni was invited to go for an early morning ride with the absolutely charming local marquis - something she has not done for 25 years (with anybody) ... needless to say she couldn't get her knees together in over a week."

But social mores change. The round robin, by my estimation, finally died in about 2018. Yet it died

predicting our present era. Untrammeled boasting, until recently so gauche, has in the span of a decade or so become perfectly acceptable, at least on social media. It is now normal to witness bragging from every portal, but we forget that this constitutes an abrupt social shift.

Consider that, a few years ago, producing and publicising a set of photos of oneself, of the sort that ape model shots in magazines, would have been a deeply ridiculous thing for an ordinary person to do. Now it is commonplace. Inflicting one's holiday snaps on unsuspecting dinner guests was once a famous faux pas. Everyone now inflicts them on everybody. The listing of personal triumphs on social media is so pervasive that it is more unusual to hear the news in person. The round robin has not died. We are now a round-robin society.

It is worth noting how odd it is that we tolerate boasting on this scale, and not just relative to our own recent past. In their recent book *Why Men?*, anthropologists Nancy Lindisfarne and Jonathan Neale write about a society at the opposite extreme: the !Kung, a group of Kalahari hunter-gatherers who go to great efforts to avoid bragging to each other, even - especially - when they have done something worth bragging about.

When a skilled hunter kills something large, the authors write, he is expected to return to camp and claim to have killed nothing. "Then, under repeated questioning, he would admit that

✳ **Martha Gill**
is an Observer
columnist

perhaps he killed a small animal, but he was so weak he needed help carrying the game back to camp."

Others return with him to fetch it, saying things like: "To think I gave up a nice day in the shade for this." It is proper for the hunter to agree with them. "You're right, this one is not worth the effort." This way, egos are kept in check and social balance maintained.

In every society there exists a tension between two human instincts: the desire to indulge one's ego and the desire to forge connections and be liked. The former produces a gratifying surge of serotonin; the latter a warm bath of oxytocin. Let your ego expand beyond some threshold, and you may forfeit being liked, or even tolerated. For there is something particularly antisocial about boasting: it inspires no kindly feelings in the breasts of others. It produces no strong bonds.

All societies tend to react to overly boastful people in the same way. First there is gentle teasing, then ridicule, then, if that fails to work, ostracism. What does it mean for us, then, that we have become a group of fragile egos, advertising at each other - even our friends - from Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and TikTok? It is unsurprising that studies find we are feeling increasingly disconnected from each other: individuals competing rather than social beings behaving in pro-social ways. They also find we are becoming more anxious - perhaps for good reason. After all, boasting makes you vulnerable to the resentment of others: it is not just celebrities who get ostracised on social media these days.

It turns out we might not be well adapted to this new boastful world of ours. Perhaps human nature hasn't changed so much, so quickly, after all ● *Observer*



DIPLOMACY

The old bipolar frames of reference don't work in new world disorder

Timothy Garton Ash

As the leaders of the world's two superpowers, the US and China, held a summit meeting in San Francisco last week, many observers have harked back to grand bipolar simplicities. A new cold war! The west versus the rest! Democracy versus autocracy! Let's woo the global south! But the great Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt warned us always to beware of the *terribles simplificateurs*, the frightful simplifiers. The beginning of wisdom is to understand that we now live in a world fragmented between multiple great and middle powers who do not divide simply into two camps.

The results of an ambitious new round of global polling help us to understand this new world disorder. Conducted for the European Council on Foreign Relations and an Oxford University research project on Europe in a Changing World that I co-direct, this is the second time we have surveyed what we call in shorthand the Citrus countries: China, India, Turkey, Russia and the United States. This autumn we added to them five other major non-European countries - Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil and South Korea - as well as covering 11 European countries.

Our polling was completed before the outbreak of the war between Israel and Hamas, but we did ask how likely it was that, within the next five years, the United States and China would enter into direct military confrontation over Taiwan. Fifty-two per cent of those asked in China and 39% in the US said it was likely.

One other thing to disturb your sleep. Among countries that don't already have nuclear weapons, 62% of those asked in Saudi Arabia, 56% in South Korea, 48% in Turkey and 41% in South Africa favour their countries getting access to them.

Europe and the US win the soft power beauty contest hands down. Asked where you would like to live if not in your own country, clear majorities in Brazil, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea and Turkey indicated

GUARDIAN DESIGN

Europe or the United States. Only in South Africa did the proportion of respondents choosing China exceed 10%. People in most of these countries choose “the United States and its partners” over “China and its partners” on both human rights and internet regulation. They also say that Russia is not part of Europe “when it comes to its current political values”.

They are distinctly underwhelmed by European hard power, but impressed by that of the US. On trade, China is the favoured partner, but almost all of these countries prefer the United States over China when it comes to “security cooperation”. Then we asked: if your country was forced to choose between being part of an American or a Chinese bloc of countries, which would you prefer it to end up in? The US wins hands down. If push came to shove, people in Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea and Turkey say they would choose a US-led bloc. On this, as on much else, the only clear exception is Russia.

So, the rest prefer the west? Well, maybe if forced to choose. But what really emerges from our two rounds of polling, taken together with other evidence, is that most of these countries think that they can choose not to choose. They can have closer economic relations with China, security cooperation with the US and simultaneously enjoy all the delights that soft power Europe has to offer. A world with many competing powers gives them the chance to mix and match.

A multipolar world, in this form, enables not multilateralism, nor even non-alignment as it was understood in the cold war, but rather what the Indian leader Narendra Modi has called multialignment. A great power among other great powers, you pursue your own national interests wherever they lead you, aligning with different partners on different issues. I and my co-authors, Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, characterise this as an à la carte world, contrasting it with the old set menus of the cold war, to which the US president, Joe Biden, harks back with his binary framing of democracy versus autocracy.

Many people have enjoyed (and a few friendships been broken over) the board game Diplomacy, in which you play as early-20th-century European great powers forging sacred, perpetual alliances – and then treacherously switching sides, leaving your best friend in the lurch. But in the early 21st century, the real-life Diplomacy covers the entire world – and it’s now a four-dimensional game. You can be aligned with the US on security while cosying up to Russia on energy and China on trade. It’s not just major extra-European powers who are into this game. Aleksandar Vučić’s Serbia plays it too, and Hungary’s Viktor Orbán is the ultimate cynic at the board.

The lesson for the west is not that we should abandon our values. It’s that we should get a lot smarter, seeing the world as it is, not as we wish it to be. Avoid all those simplistic binary framings and instead develop targeted strategies for particular great and middle powers, such as India, South Africa or Turkey. You’ll never win unless you understand the new rules of the game ●

Death and horror in Sudan are being overshadowed by conflicts elsewhere

Sudan’s descent from the promise of freedom to the brink of genocide has come at dizzying speed. The revolution that led to the military ousting the dictator Omar al-Bashir in April 2019 was followed by a coup that removed civilian leaders – and then, this spring, by the outbreak of war between the Sudanese army and paramilitary forces.

At a relentless pace, the clash between the army under Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) under Lt Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo has spread across the country. More than 10,000 people are estimated to have been killed so far, and 4.8 million displaced internally, with another 1.2 million fleeing to neighbouring countries. The UN humanitarian coordinator for the country, Clementine Nkweta-Salami, said this month that the violence against civilians is “verging on pure evil”. Greed for resources and power, and longstanding rivalries, all fuel the fire.

More than 1,000 members of the Masalit community are believed to have been killed in Ardamta, West Darfur, in early November by the RSF and allied Arab militias. It led the EU to warn that the world cannot allow a repeat of the genocide of the early 2000s, through which the Janjaweed militia rose, later formalising into the RSF. New reports of the enslavement of women and men are emerging.

What looked like a stalemate in the wider war has morphed with dramatic gains by the RSF over recent weeks in Darfur and elsewhere in the west, and advances into former army

strongholds. US, European and African officials believe arms shipments from the United Arab Emirates and via the Wagner Group have been key, though the UAE denies equipping either side. Egypt’s support for the Sudanese army, though less sustained, has deepened the conflict. Western governments should press Abu Dhabi and Cairo to pull back.

One prospect is that Sudan could effectively become divided into two zones, as Libya has been. Another is perhaps even more disturbing – that it may splinter, leaving those on the ground in ever more danger.

Yet all of this is happening with minimal interest or attention from the outside world, which is consumed by the wars in Gaza and Ukraine and broader geopolitical rivalries. The difficulties of reporting from Sudan have further enabled this neglect. Even the basic task of feeding refugees is not adequately addressed: the UN has warned that food for the half a million who have fled to Chad will run out next month without extra funding. Little wonder that they feel abandoned.

Officials and analysts warn of the lack of international engagement and urgency when it comes to finding an exit from this conflict. Though both sides apparently wanted to resume talks, hopes for a breakthrough are low. The RSF has no reason to make concessions. Amid all of this, the innocent are terrorised, and the aspiration to civilian rule appears a receding dream. But the generals have shown they are neither fit to govern Sudan, nor capable of doing so ●

* Timothy Garton Ash is a historian, political writer and columnist



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Democracy isn't totally lost - even if Trump wins

Even if a second Trump presidency were to dismantle American democracy, ask why the current best examples of totalitarianism, Russia and China, still maintain token parliaments - paying lip service to accountability to the people (The nightmare scenario, Big story, 17 November). Such practice implicitly acknowledges that democracy is indeed the best form of government.

Though his supporters might succumb to Trump's dictatorial instincts, it doesn't mean that a totalitarian America couldn't be democratic again. Such dabbling in totalitarianism would only be an interlude in the long history of humankind searching for the best form of governance that still caters to self-interest. One has to think in years, or perhaps a generation or more, though.

*Jim Gomez
Whitby, Ontario, Canada*

How the west doubles down on mistakes in Gaza

Congratulations to Arwa Mahdawi (Why is it too much to ask for Palestinians to be viewed as humans?, Opinion, 17 November) on a wonderful and accurate article articulating the problems in Gaza. The (western) world has made

so many mistakes with this matter and instead of recognising these failings, it simply doubles down and protects one side. Two wrongs or multiple wrongs do not make things right.

The Jewish community has been wrongly persecuted for a long period for nothing more than its religious beliefs. They are simply people. This is wrong. Muslims have been persecuted for a long period for nothing more than their religious beliefs. They are simply people. This is wrong.

It is time for the (western) world to find a good solution but alas we will not.

*Kim Waters
Lara, Victoria, Australia*

● There's no chance of a separate Palestinian state for Gaza as long as the Israelis covet the oil and gas in the Leviathan field between Israel and Cyprus.

*Charles Drace
Christchurch, New Zealand*

The public school system retains its grip on politics

Pippa Crerar's account of chaos in Downing Street as described to the Covid inquiry (Spotlight, 10 November), reminded me of the time, 50 years ago, when the approved school system for young offenders was dismantled and I became responsible for about 500 ex-pupils.

They persistently lied,

they used foul language, were disrespectful to those around them and misogynistic. They lacked empathy, were sexually incontinent and incapable of obeying rules that would keep them, and others, safe.

Psychologists called their condition "boarding school syndrome" because most of them had been brought up away from home.

While the public school system retains its grip on politics, we must expect to be governed by an emotionally deprived elite.

*Wally Harbert
Frome, England, UK*

Cameron may be back but don't forget his record

Re David Cameron's return to government as foreign secretary (UK report, 17 November), he should be remembered for two major policies.

First, austerity, which left the public realm so damaged. His recent evidence to the Covid inquiry showed that he has learned nothing. And second, enabling us to leave Europe, having failed to negotiate an adequate agreement with the EU, thus leaving the country to the Tory chaos of the past seven years. A brilliant appointment, Rishi Sunak.

*Michael Griffith-Jones
London, England, UK*

Braverman links are nothing to be proud of

In linking Suella Braverman and the current Conservative party with nihilism (Braverman is sunk, and the Tory nihilists will never win elections, Opinion, 17 November), you do nihilism a disservice. Nihilism, as a political movement, was progressive, based as it was on socialism and reason, which are hardly trademarks of the Conservatives.

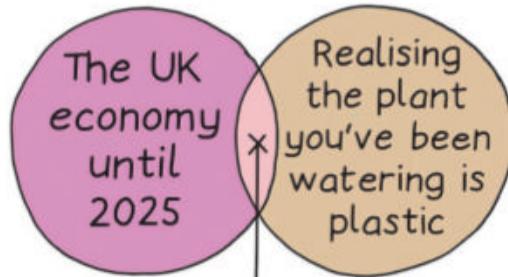
*George Gay
Reigate, England, UK*

Why some crossword fans may fall off the grid

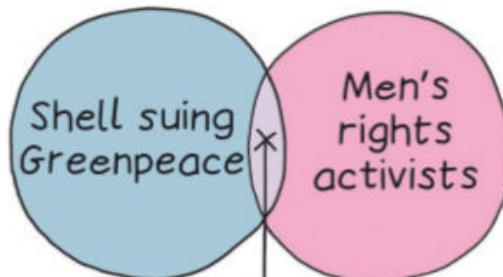
Much as I am addicted to your page of crosswords and sudoku, I am losing patience with it, or maybe losing my grip on a fast-changing language.

As a long time expat with a venerable and ancient English dictionary, when I discovered that an answer (1 across in cryptic crossword 29,209, 3 November) was "whataboutery", I doubted the word's existence, as well as how it came from a clue cryptic enough to be totally obscure. Please remember your faithful but possibly old fashioned readers (this could apply to some "pop" culture articles as well!).

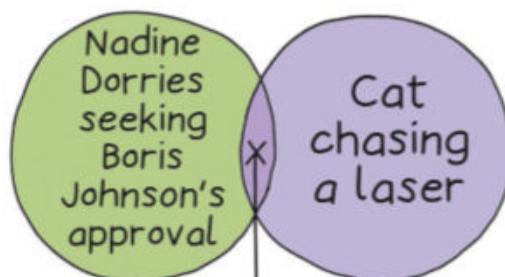
*Kris Misselbrook
Samouillan, Haute-Garonne, France*

A WEEK IN VENN DIAGRAMS
Edith Pritchett

No growth forecast



Playing the victim



Desperate and doomed pursuit

MUSIC

About face: the unlikely album cover stars

Page 55 →

Culture

From stage to screen, regal dramas are now everywhere – with scant regard for accuracy. As *The Crown* returns, *Mark Lawson* asks if this is the TV show's legacy

The royal treatment ↗





▲ Deep dive

Elizabeth Debicki returns as Diana, Princess of Wales in the final season of *The Crown*

DANIEL ESCALE/NETFLIX

Peter Morgan realised the royals are a blank screen on to which speech can be projected

IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE END for *The Crown*, much praised for its A-list acting and circa \$277,000-per-minute production values, but widely criticised for its screenwriter Peter Morgan inventing dialogue for the royal family in actual and imagined situations. Netflix has now released the first four parts of the sixth and final series, with the last six to follow next month. This run begins with the death in Paris of Diana, Princess of Wales - though with actress Elizabeth Debicki reappearing as the princess's ghost, which suggests that Morgan and the producers (Left Bank Pictures) have not been cowed by rows over taste.

But as it ends, it's increasingly clear what *The Crown* started: a seismic shift in royal representation on stage and screen. Take two new plays just opened in London: *Backstairs Billy*, by Marcelo dos Santos, imagines the relationship between the queen mother and her closest servant, Billy Tallon; while Jonathan Maitland's *The Interview* explores the 1995 Panorama interview Diana gave to Martin Bashir.

Both shows overlap with *The Crown*: *The Interview* closely parallels its season five episodes which dealt with negotiations between Diana and Bashir; Penelope Wilton is playing the queen mother in *Backstairs Billy*, a play that is on newer ground, Tallon being one of the few royal characters not animated by Morgan.

It's hard to imagine, though, that either play could exist without the example of *The Crown*. Nor that two films about Prince Andrew's disastrous Newsnight interview with Emily Maitlis would currently be in production: Netflix's *Scoop* and Amazon Prime's *A Very Royal Scandal* with, respectively, Rufus Sewell and Michael Sheen as the prince, and Gillian Anderson and Ruth Wilson as the interviewer.

Clearly inspired by the genre Morgan started, the Andrew-Maitlis films could be seen as continuations of *The Crown*, as the ill-judged interview falls after its time-scale. But the series has spawned a remarkable number of offspring. Others include *Red, White & Royal Blue* (Amazon Prime), in which the son of America's first female president has an affair with the grandson of the British king. And *Young Royals* (Netflix), in which a scandalous Scandinavian prince is sent to a boarding school for rehab.

This spate is a result of Morgan breaking with the long

tradition of cultural reverence towards the royals that started as legal restriction and continued as regal cringe. Until 1968, all British theatre scripts had to be approved by the Lord Chamberlain, a member of the royal household. While generally censorious, the blue-blood blue-pencilers were especially protective of their employer.

In his 2001 book *Politics, Prudery and Perversions*, Nicholas de Jongh points out that it was not until the accession of George VI, in 1936, that the censor would even read scripts featuring Queen Victoria, who had died 35 years earlier. Ironically, British stage censorship ended after the Chamberlain's failed attempt to ban private "club" performances (a way around censorship) of Edward Bond's 1968 play *Early Morning*, which involved Queen Victoria in a lurid plot featuring lesbianism and cannibalism.

Even so, a perceived prohibition on playing a living monarch (also enforced on TV) survived another 20 years, through a combination of obsequiousness and fear of criticism from royalists. In 1988, when the National Theatre scheduled Alan Bennett's *A Question of Attribution*, with Prunella Scales as the Queen, artistic director Richard Eyre faced (his memoirs reveal) "threats" from two Labour peers on his board.

Eyre won, the production pleased audiences and a 1991 TV version on the BBC - an organisation terrified of offending the royals - further liberated the subject. Gradually, the palace gates inched open, with new widenings later forced by Morgan. His 2006 movie *The Queen* and spin-off stage play *The Audience*, both starring Helen Mirren as Elizabeth II, led to *The Crown*.

It is said that Netflix is the only network with the money to make *The Crown*, which costs an estimated \$15m per episode. That may be true, but it is equally the case that only a streamer based in the US, where the royals have showbiz rather than constitutional significance, would have taken the risk of making a factually loose fiction about the Windsors, further emboldened by not being subject to UK media regulator Ofcom.

In the UK, royal fiction distanced itself through broad satire and comedy. Four years before the Queen was portrayed at the National she had been lampooned in ITV's *Spitting Image*, while a similar cartoonish humour infused Channel 4's *The Windsors*. But the crucial - and controversial - innovation of *The Crown* was to depict royalty with the quasi-documentary realism of acting and lavish scenery.

Morgan started cautiously. Perhaps to get round American incomprehension at a head of state who is not the head of government, Morgan makes Elizabeth a presidential figure who solves the Suez crisis, plots to remove Winston Churchill as PM, and is deeply involved in Commonwealth politics. A viewer who learned history from the Netflix series would be mystified by this month's spectacle of Charles III reading a king's speech that significantly differed from what seemed to be his opinions while Prince of Wales.

However, the fact that we will never know if Charles privately baulked at what Rishi Sunak gave him to say - or what the Queen actually said to PM Anthony Eden during Suez - provides the space that Morgan has filled. His lucrative genius was to realise the Windsors are a blank screen on to which speech and scenarios can be projected - especially once a writer no longer risks imprisonment, unemployment or social disgrace.

For me, the show's finest two hours are *Smoke and Mirrors*, in which the 1953 Coronation is watched, from

REVIEW
The Crown,
Season 6

★★★★★

Welcome to The Diana Show. The Crown is now plummeting into the abyss, despite brilliant performances from the entire cast. Diana is, in The Crown's telling, a virtual saint: see her talk about landmines! See her fall in love with Dodi! After her death, Ghost Diana appears to Prince Charles and then to the Queen: it is a crass, by-numbers piece of film-making, with a script that barely aspires to craft, let alone art. It is the very definition of typing-not-writing.

Lucy Mangan

his exile in France, by the Duke of Windsor, the king who abdicated; and Terra Nullius, about Charles and Diana's state visit to Australia. In both, so much biography and journalism had already been written that Morgan had no need of too much fictionalisation. As Charles and Diana had each given long TV interviews about their marriage, it was reasonable for drama to take on the story.

But from early on, there were warnings – in subplots falsely implicating Prince Philip in his sister's death and gossiping about the Queen's relationship with her racing trainer – that the show would be more concerned with visual rather than factual accuracy. Morgan favours a narrative in which two stories are entwined, even if they actually happened years apart. In Bubbikins, Prince Philip's mother is exiled to England during the filming of the BBC documentary *The Royal Family* (it didn't), which aired in 1969, and the plot is resolved by a fictional Guardian journalist writing a piece that never existed.

In the recent *Macbeth* at Shakespeare's Globe theatre in London, the king and queen are crowned wearing replicas of Charles and Camilla's coronation kit – a bold allusion, given how ruinously unsuited to office Macbeth proves. At the National Theatre (patron: Queen Camilla), a new play – *Death of England: Closing Time* by Clint Dyer and Roy Williams – included a monologue mocking the new monarch as “a 74-year-old man who's never worked a day in his life”.

That's evidence of how far we have come since 1968 – and it was *The Crown* that showed the way. Diana's ghost has already been seen on stage in *The Interview*, endorsing playwright Maitland's view that the Bashir interview should not have been withdrawn by the BBC. And *Backstairs Billy* includes an invented scene showing the queen mother brutally humiliating her page (it involves dog dirt) to remind him who's in charge. This seems a reasonable



metaphor for the Windsors' treatment of assorted in-laws and employees, but would never have been seen before Morgan. In *Backstairs Billy*, Wilton stays close to her own warm, round tones, rather than the queen mother's actual clipped, chillier voice – which can be seen as another nod to *The Crown*, where all three queens used diction less posh than archive footage suggests, to lessen viewer alienation.

While friends of the king – John Major, Judi Dench – criticised season five for invention and intrusion, it's unlikely we'll ever know what senior royals think, although there is an intriguing hint. One actor in *The Crown* and another in *The Windsors* – who had both previously met the royals through charity work and showbiz premieres – told me they had been advised by the palace to stay out of hand-shaking “receiving lines” lest offence be caused by an encounter between the actor and the royal they played.

Such is the Morgan effect. Thanks to *The Crown*, there may soon be few Equity members left who can expect an invitation to a Buckingham Palace garden party.

MARK LAWSON IS A GUARDIAN WRITER AND BROADCASTER

► Royal wave

Claire Foy in season one of *The Crown*

ALEX BAILEY/NETFLIX



► Drama queen

Imelda Staunton in the final season of *The Crown*

JUSTIN DOWNING/NETFLIX



◀ In spirit

Yolanda Kettle as Princess Diana in *The Interview*

MICHAEL WHARLEY/PARK THEATRE/PA

► Peer pressure

Prunella Scales and Alan Bennett in *A Question of Attribution*

ALASTAIR MUIR/REX



◀ Role play

Penelope Wilton as the queen mother in *Backstairs Billy*

JOHAN PERSSON

DANCE

Let it all out! Taking Tears for Fears to a new stage

Choreographer Emmanuel Gat explains why the music of the 80s pop duo was just right for the soundtrack to his latest production

By Lyndsey Winship

▼ Material world

'A tumble of fabric layers': LoveTrain2020

JULIA GAT



All around me are familiar faces / worn-out places, worn-out faces" goes the song, and a man on stage in a voluminous skirt jerks his body with the beat as Mad World fills the auditorium. LoveTrain2020 is the new show from Marseille-based Israeli choreographer Emmanuel Gat, set entirely to the music of Tears for Fears. Not the usual soundtrack for contemporary dance, but if Birmingham Royal Ballet can dance to Black Sabbath, then why not?

Gat, 54, never owned a Tears for Fears album when he was growing up near Tel Aviv in the 1980s as a shaggy-haired surf-mad teen. "I was listening to a lot of progressive rock, Pink Floyd, Genesis, Jethro Tull," he tells me in the green room after a show in Bruges. "But everybody knows this music, everywhere we go."

Choreographing for 30 years, Gat is best known for works set to classical music and jazz (he studied music and originally planned to be a conductor). He's never used pop before, and it's all thanks to an algorithm. One day he was walking, headphones in, "and I don't think I had it on my playlist, but for some reason Sowing the Seeds of Love started to play. I hadn't heard it for years, and I was like, this is actually really good music! The text, the treatment of the sound, the composition, it made me curious."

Pop is hard to work with because it's got such a strong identity and insistent rhythm. Gat drums a 4/4 beat on the table: "It's very powerful music, it doesn't leave much space. It sucks the air out of the room. It was easier to choreograph to Pierre Boulez than Tears for Fears." They got permission to use the tracks, but Gat's not sure if band members Curt Smith and Roland Orzabal even

know about it. "You go through an agency that contacts the label to get the rights, then the last part of the process is sending a personal letter to the artist, to which there was no answer," he says. "And I thought, maybe it stops at their agent and he thinks, 'Contemporary dance? Whatever!' He's not even going to bother them with it because there's no money in it."

He would love them to come. "But maybe they'll come and say, oh, we don't allow it. They can reverse the decision to grant the rights if they don't like what they see!"

I think they'd like it. It's not what you'd expect from dancing to pop music. The dancers first appear to tracks from 1983's *The Hurting* album, looking as if they've gone wild in the haberdashery, a tumble of fabric layers. Later, when we get to *Everybody Wants to Rule the World* and *Shout*, they're stripped to their underwear.

The music reveals itself as surprisingly dark, eerie and emotive. The dance is unpindownable. Gat's not interested in just dancing on the beat, that's too easy. "As a viewer it shuts your brain off," he says. "You become passive." He wants his dance "with some kind of question mark, not an exclamation mark".

There's no one style or technique; the work is created by Gat setting tasks for the dancers who improvise within a framework. In fact Gat balks at the ego of choreographers who create dance based on their own particular way of moving and then ask dancers to imitate.

His job, choreography, "is just organising actions and interactions in time and space, that's all". And yet for him, the studio becomes a microcosm of the world and its structures and systems. "I understand the world by understanding choreography," he says. "My subject matter is people, groups, and it's easy to find the analogies about why society behaves the way it does."

For example, economics, he explains, is about resources, and how you control and distribute them. In the studio, the creative decision-making is the resources. Gat can choose to keep hold of all the decisions and hand down instructions, or share the responsibilities. "It's easy to tell if the system is functioning in rehearsal, because they're smiling," he says. "If they look like they're suffering, something's wrong. Life is the same. If we have 1% controlling resources, individuals with more resources than whole countries, it doesn't make sense. That's why we have misery." Mad world indeed.

"I put the dancers in a position that is active," Gat says. "In which they can own the responsibility for their decisions, and as a consequence they become free. Then I look at our society and I think, yeah, that's why we're fucked." So he's creating utopia on stage? "Absolutely."

LYNDSEY WINSHIP IS THE GUARDIAN'S DANCE CRITIC

Lyndsey Winship's trip to Bruges was provided by Sadler's Wells. LoveTrain2020 is touring Europe until June 2024



Cover stars

As the identity is finally revealed of a curious figure on a Led Zeppelin album, Dorian Lynskey considers other records that have become famous for the faces on their sleeves



When I was young, I was entranced by the mysterious figures who appeared on the sleeves of vinyl albums. Where did Roxy Music find their inexhaustible supply of glamorous women? Who was the weather-beaten fisher on the front of the Cure's Standing on a Beach? I assumed that the nine celebrities on the sleeve of Band on the Run by Paul McCartney and Wings - including Michael Parkinson, entertainer Kenny Lynch and Liberal MP Clement Freud - represented the actual line-up of Wings, which would have made for a challenging studio environment.

In the Google era, one can answer these questions in seconds. Roxy Music knew a lot of models, and Bryan Ferry dated half of them. The fisher (retired) was called John Button. ("The man featured on the album cover was not a member of the Cure," Wikipedia helpfully notes.) Parkinson did not play with Wings. Some mysteries, however, have proved harder to solve.

Led Zeppelin's untitled fourth album has always exerted particular fascination. Commonly known as Led Zeppelin IV, it has also been dubbed "Zoso", after the occult runes on the cover. The old man in the centre, bent double by his cargo of bound branches, resembles a sinister apparition from an MR James ghost story.

Now the historian Brian Edwards has identified the man as Lot Long, a Victorian thatcher from Wiltshire. Fans can decide whether this discovery

enriches the artwork or spoils the enigma.

When physical music sales collapsed 20 years ago, it was widely predicted that both the album and its sleeve were doomed and music would be consumed from now on as just an ugly string of file names. This has not come to pass for various reasons, from the surprising tenacity of vinyl to the growing importance of merchandise to an artist's bottom line. The Spotify app might not offer the same visual spectacle as an LP sleeve but it still demands images that can pack a visual punch as tiny digital squares. Faces, whether the artist's or someone else's, are ideal.

Some artists are lucky enough to know the right faces. The bleary-eyed cigarette smoker on the Arctic Monkeys' debut album is the band's acquaintance Chris McClure, while the doe-eyed child on U2's albums Boy and War is Peter Rowan, the younger brother of Bono's friend Guggi.

Others seek to forge an aesthetic kinship with the distant or the dead. Morrissey's eye for an evocative image from the 1960s saw Alain Delon and Billie Whitelaw agree to their image being used; Albert Finney and George Best declined.

Often legal permission is required only from the photographer or rights holder, not the subject, which can cause unease. US marine Michael Wynn, photographed in Vietnam in 1967, belatedly protested in 2019 that he "wasn't real happy" with having the slogan on his helmet changed from "Make War Not Love" to the title of the Smiths' 1985 album: "Meat Is Murder".

Some US states have "right of publicity" laws, which open up the appropriation of an individual's likeness without their consent to civil liability. Former model Ann Kirsten Kennis sued Vampire Weekend and their record label for \$2m after the band used a 1983 Polaroid of her on the cover of their 2010 album Contra. "Who do these people think they are that they can just take my picture from God only knows where and plaster it everywhere?" she told Vanity Fair. (The suit was settled for an undisclosed sum.)

► Stick man

The cover of Led Zeppelin IV, showing the man whom a historian has identified as Lot Long, a Victorian thatcher from Wiltshire

WILTSHIRE MUSEUM



► Hat tip

The Smiths' Meat Is Murder



The likenesses of celebrities have additional legal protections. The Beatles sought permission from every living person in the collage on Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band but the Rolling Stones' more cavalier approach to image rights on 1978's Some Girls managed to outrage Lucille Ball, Raquel Welch and Judy Garland's daughter Liza Minnelli. A modified sleeve was produced.

Younger cover stars can develop retrospective reservations. David Fox, the face-pulling 12-year-old on Placebo's debut album, later claimed the image triggered such intense bullying that he had to leave his school.

Image wrongs
Sleeve stars Ann Kirsten Kennis and Spencer Eilden both took legal action over the use of their pictures

ALAMY

Spencer Eilden, who appears as a naked baby on the cover of Nirvana's Nevermind, recently sued for alleged child sexual exploitation. The suit has twice been dismissed; Eilden is appealing.

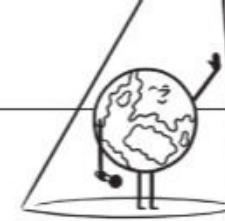
Artists tend to have a double-edged view of copyright: they appreciate protection of their own work but crave the freedom to grab the perfect image, like a musical sample, without having to secure watertight permission or consider the feelings of the individuals concerned.

In that respect Led Zeppelin's mystical obsession with England's past served them well. Lot Long died in 1893, so whether he would have appreciated his association with Stairway to Heaven, cryptic runes and rock'n'roll bacchanalia we will never know. *Observer*

DORIAN LYNSKEY IS A WRITER AND PODCASTER



Reviews



STAGE

Harmony

Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York

★★★★★

Harmony, a sort-of new Broadway musical from Barry Manilow and Bruce Sussman, opens with a German singing group called the Comedian Harmonists performing at Carnegie Hall in 1933. This is framed to the audience by former group member Josef Cycowski (Chip Zien), now an elderly man, who introduces himself, then introduces an audition scene where the group members are first introduced to each other. It's a lot of introductions for the opening 10 minutes of a musical. The show has been on its way to Broadway for a quarter-century, with Manilow and Sussman running versions of the show in San Diego, Atlanta and Los Angeles. This production feels like it's had plenty of time to marinate in its own importance.

The story of the Comedian Harmonists is a potentially interesting one; the group met as young men in 1920s Germany, forming a close-harmony ensemble. The songs they perform in the show, with music by Manilow and lyrics by Sussman, are not from the group's real-life repertoire. The show suggests a cornier version of Cabaret, though the uptempo numbers are robustly performed by the six-man ensemble.

Harmony isn't without pleasures or insights. The Harmonists sound great together, and there are moments where Sussman and Manilow entwine their personal and broader doubts and remorse with quiet heartbreak. But much of the show has signs of a would-be magnum opus allowed, over the course of many years, to spin itself into a tizzy. *Jesse Hassenger*
Booking until September 2024



FILM

Napoleon

Dir: Ridley Scott

★★★★★

Many directors have tried following Napoleon where the paths of glory lead, and maybe it is only defiant defeat that is really glorious. But Ridley Scott - the Wellington of cinema - has created an outrageously enjoyable cavalry charge of a movie, a full-tilt biopic of two and a half hours in which Scott doesn't allow his troops to get bogged down in the muddy terrain of either fact or metaphysical significance, the tactical issues that have defeated other film-makers.

Joaquin Phoenix plays Napoleon as a military genius and lounge lizard peacock. Others might show Napoleon as a dreamy loner, but for Scott he is one half of a racy power couple: passionately, despairingly in love with Vanessa Kirby's pragmatically sensual Josephine. Scott makes this warring pair the Burton and Taylor of imperial France.

As symbol and icon, Napoleon has always been seductive. But Scott doesn't detain the audience with metaphysical meaning and certainly doesn't withhold the old-fashioned pleasures of spectacle and excitement. *Peter Bradshaw*
On general release

Podcast of the week *What Now? With Trevor Noah*

Have people become too scared of uncomfortable conversations? Trevor Noah thinks so - that's why he's pushing the intimate celebrity format to the next level. First up: Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson opens up about parenting worries, depression and, er, running for president. *Hollie Richardson*



FICTION

Sky's the limit

A crew of six look down lovingly at the Earth in this finely crafted meditation on hope, beauty, the ordinary and the spectacular

By Alexandra Harris

▲ Space oddity
Europe is outlined 'with fine precision' by its night-lit roads

NICOELNINO/ISTOCK/GETTY

Six astronauts are bobbing about in a spacecraft, looking out at their planet as they circle it. From up here, 400km above the surface, Japan is a wisp. The Philippines appear "scarily frail". Though the views are on a planetary scale, the object of their mesmerised observation is as intricate as a Fabergé egg. All of Europe is "outlined with fine precision", ringed by a golden thread of night-lit roads. Autumn blooms in the Jiuzhaigou valley, Tunisian salt flats glow in *cloisonné* pink. The astronauts who turn and turn through Samantha Harvey's finely crafted meditation on the Earth, beauty and human aspiration are in the process of understanding themselves in new ways, too.

Harvey has long been a fearless explorer in wild places. She started with *The Wilderness*, accompanying a man with Alzheimer's into regions far out beyond the usual signposts of today's date and the prime minister's name. Each book since then has been as conceptually rugged as it is stylistically honed.

Space, by comparison, seems more knowable and less lonely. With this slender and stretchy fifth novel, Harvey makes an ecstatic voyage with an imagined crew on the International Space Station, and looks back to Earth with a lover's eye. Orbital goes into flight for a single day, though a day is a different thing up here, where "the whip-crack of morning arrives every ninety minutes" and the sun is "up-down-up-down like a mechanical toy". It's a nicely giddying structural ploy to align each chapter with an orbit of the Earth: 16 orbits in all.

The astronauts go about their laboratory tasks, monitoring microbes or the growth of cabbages. They work with a sense of vocation that is unabated. Nothing has dimmed for them. Sometimes the observers want

to see the planet's most theatrical displays, but often it's the small things ("the lights of fishing boats off the coast of Malaysia") that most affect them. Even the atheists ponder whether those lucky enough to live on Earth might already have died and be in a heavenly afterlife.

While the astronauts clock up their hours on the treadmill to prevent muscle wastage, Harvey takes on the imaginative athletics of finding language for this optical feasting and metaphysical reflection. The greater challenge for the heaven-faring novelist lies in allowing us to feel for ourselves the power of these sights. Thrilled reports of exquisite light effects start to fall a little flat. The beauty of the book is at work less in its explicit hymns of praise than deep in its rhythms and structures. And it's here that some of the most compelling thinking goes on. There are sentences that start with a Miltonic boom and move to a gentle hum.

"The six characters were supposed to be one," Virginia Woolf told a friend who had just read *The Waves*. "I did mean that in some way we are the same person, and not separate people." Harvey's six astronauts have their individual pasts and preoccupations, they think their way back to their different countries, but together they form a collective being. "Drawn like moths" to hover at the windows and see auroral lights folding and flexing around the globe, they are conscious of themselves as a composite creature.

The Russians go off to their "decrepit Soviet bunker", but geopolitical divisions are hard to maintain when moving at 27,000km/h. "Please use your own national toilet" reads the sign on the spacecraft loos, perkily disregarded by astronauts who are drinking each other's recycled urine. Russian, Chinese, American, British, Italian: they offer themselves as emblems of human cooperation. That's convincing enough, until you look up from the page.

Orbital is a hopeful book: an Anthropocene book resistant to doom. We might miss the restless anger that tossed about in Harvey's *The Shapeless Unease*, but Orbital offers vehement appreciation of the world in a range of tones and situations.

One of the Russian cosmonauts likes to pick up amateur radio signals from Earth in a kind of cosmic phone-in. A voice from Vancouver asks whether it's ever disappointing up there. "Are you dispirited ... crestfallen?" The Russian

explains that, in space, he is never disappointed. In space he sees that even his sleeping bag is a thing full of life; untethered from gravity, "it billows". And so while a planet of "miraculous and bizarre loveliness" shines at the window, the sleeping bags go on quietly billowing, and the novel musters its energy for another ascent, refusing to be crestfallen.



BOOK OF

THE WEEK

Orbital

By Samantha Harvey

ALEXANDRA HARRIS IS AN AUTHOR, CRITIC AND ACADEMIC

HISTORY

Now and then

David Kynaston's epic social history focuses on 28 extraordinary months, covering Bond, the Beatles and the death of Churchill

By Charlie English

▼ Yesterday

The Beatles pose for portrait backstage 1962

HARRY HAMMOND/
V&A IMAGES/GETTY



FICTION

Reality check

The latest novella from the new Nobel laureate is a shimmering fable about a man lost in a dark and snowy forest

By Lauren Groff

Philip Larkin famously located Britain's sexual revolution in 1963, "Between the end of the Chatterley ban / And the Beatles' first LP." Until that moment, sex for the repressed people of these islands meant only "a wrangle for the ring"; whereas after it, "every life became / A brilliant breaking of the bank". The fact that Larkin, then in his early 40s, felt this had come "rather late" for him personally didn't stop him naming the year an *Annus Mirabilis*.

The year 1963 is also where the social historian David Kynaston has arrived in his epic account of post-second world war Britain, *Tales of a New Jerusalem*, which now reaches its fourth instalment. Kynaston's eye is cooler than Larkin's, yet he, too, identifies a cultural hinge-point in this short period (the book covers only 28 months). This was the moment when the "Daddy Knows Best" culture of the 50s began to crumble and a freer, more individualistic Britain emerged.

Kynaston's method is to gather a vast breadth of primary material, which he curates almost as much as he writes. Sources here are drawn from an admirable cross-section of society. The weight of detail can become overwhelming, especially when Kynaston gathers lists of unconnected events into enormous, semicolon-strewn sentences. But mass observation requires masses of material, and soon we start to detect patterns.

Kynaston starts where he left off, in early October 1962, when the Beatles have just put out their first single, *Love Me Do*, and the first Bond film, *Dr No*, has opened in British cinemas. Immediately we find echoes of our own political era. The country is at the tired end of 11 years of Tory rule, the government is in fraught, shall-we/shan't-we negotiations over membership of the Common Market, and disastrous decisions are about to be made on the railways. An international crisis (over Soviet missiles in Cuba) threatens open conflict with Moscow, and

a government minister, ex-Bullingdon Club, is caught lying to parliament (John Profumo). Plus ça change, you might think, but Kynaston's editorial touch is light, and he doesn't dwell on the modern parallels. Mostly, he wants us to understand "what Britain looked like, sounded like and felt like" in those years. So what kind of place was it? And what was about to change?

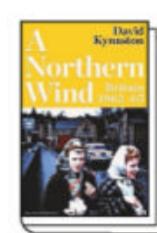
Postwar Britain remained snobbish and regimented. The elite was drawn from a handful of public schools, where they were trained to strip out all emotion and to speak in voices that were riddled with "aloof, condescending superiority", as Ted Hughes described them. By the early 60s, this group was being lampooned as "the establishment", not least by the BBC's *That Was the Week That Was*, first broadcast in November 1962, and fronted by a 23-year-old ex-grammar school boy from Kent, David Frost. Frost made the perfect establishment foil, with a "curiously classless accent, sloppy charcoal suit and overambitious haircut", as the programme's creator Ned Sherrin recalled.

Frost, the Beatles, Dr No: the 60s had begun to swing, but Britain remained a dilapidated state, home at the end of 1962 to more than a million slum houses, and 4m homes that had no bathroom or hot running water. The planners responded by bulldozing the terraces and replacing them with high-rises as per the US model, without much listening to the people who had to move into them. Brutalist new designs were brought to the town centres, too, with Georgian squares replaced by giant shopping complexes, complete with multi-storey car parks to accommodate the increasing number of motorists.

Class snobbery was one prejudice that dogged UK society. There were others. It will shock some to read that 16.5 million people tuned in each week to watch the BBC's *The Black and White Minstrel Show*, or that "colour bars", overt and covert, operated across all aspects of British

One day in late autumn, a man goes for a drive so far into the countryside that he begins to pass no more dwellings of the living, only abandoned farmhouses and cabins. At last, he pulls into a forest and goes down a road so deeply rutted that the car finally becomes stuck. Night is falling. It has begun to snow. The man leaves his car and walks into the dark woods to try to find someone to help him.

This could be the beginning of a horror story; it is, instead, the opening of *A Shining*, a slim new novella by the Norwegian writer Jon Fosse, our 2023 Nobel laureate in literature, whose fiction dissolves the border between the material and the spiritual worlds.



A Northern Wind:
Britain 1962-65

By David Kynaston

Readers who already knew Fosse perhaps had read his seven-book suite of novels called *Septology*, a three-volume single sentence monologue that is simultaneously a radiant liturgy, a doppelganger story, an *ars poetica* and a profoundly moving meditation on love, ageing and death. After I finished the last book of *Septology*, I walked around in a haze for a long while, simply grateful to be alive. One of Fosse's peculiarities is how accessible his work is to nearly anyone who allows the gentle waves of his prose to break over them. Some of this is surely due to Fosse's translator into English, the great Damion Searls.

After the protagonist has walked for a while, he becomes aware of something walking towards him, human-



A Shining

By Jon Fosse

Translated by
Damion Searls

life. In the general election of 1964, the Tory strategy in Smethwick, in the West Midlands, was so staggeringly racist that Harold Wilson, newly installed as PM, called out the victorious Conservative MP for being a “parliamentary leper”, triggering a mass Tory walkout.

Sexism and homophobia were rife, too. Women, particularly those from poorer backgrounds, had few prospects beyond marriage, motherhood and housework.

So far, so terrible, but positive aspects of 60s Britain also emerge from Kynaston's sources. Politicians of all hues at this time were committed to the welfare state, and to the idea of making society more equal. Living standards were rising fast; income inequality was low; and ideas for what we now call levelling up were big and serious. For a time, before the Labour conference rejected the motion, it seemed possible that the public school system might be abolished.

Optimism about the future abounded, while labour-saving devices and the consumer boom would deliver more free time and more choice. This was also a golden era for the arts, when Britain supported a huge range of talent.

But it was pop music, and above all the Beatles, that stood in the vanguard of social change. John, Paul, George and Ringo return repeatedly in Kynaston's narrative, steamrolling their way into the national consciousness; artfully scandalising and charming their way through the web of class rules.

A Northern Wind concludes with Churchill's funeral, on 30 January 1965. The era of empire and social deference was almost gone, and the post-war consensus was disappearing, too. Veronica Lee was a student then, living in a shared house in Leeds. She and her housemates had a mixed response to news of Churchill's death, which she recorded in her diary. “Val and I felt fairly sad,” she wrote, “but Di said he was a war-mongering old bugger.” So the page turned.

CHARLIE ENGLISH IS AN AUTHOR AND FORMER HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS AT THE GUARDIAN

shaped but not human, a presence “luminous in its whiteness, shining from within”. After the presence leaves him, the man encounters his own parents. He then sees a man in a suit with his feet bare, who leads him towards a great blooming of the radiant presence he'd seen earlier. Though the novella begins in short sentences and in the past tense, it flowers into the present tense, and the end is a glory of an extremely long sentence, giving the prose a kind of gorgeous shimmer.

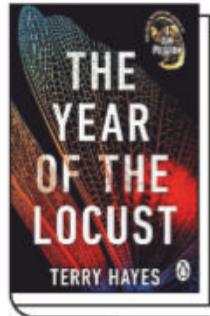
A Shining can be read in many ways: as a realistic monologue; as a fable; as a Christian-inflected allegory; as a nightmare painstakingly recounted the next morning. This refusal to succumb to the solitary, the stark, the simple, the binary seems, in this increasingly partisan world of ours, a quietly powerful moral stance.

LAUREN GROFF IS AN AMERICAN NOVELIST

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The best new crime and thriller novels

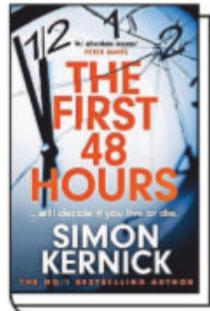
By Laura Wilson



The Year of the Locust

By Terry Hayes

It has been a decade since screenwriter Hayes's first novel, the critically acclaimed bestseller *I Am Pilgrim*: now, after many delays, comes his second. The Year of the Locust starts promisingly, as CIA agent Ridley Kane is tasked with entering Iran by stealth in order to obtain a heads-up about a spectacular act of global terrorism. With vivid descriptions, some terrific action sequences and lashings of suspense, the book ticks all the boxes necessary for a superior geopolitical thriller. But around three-quarters of the way through and with no prior warning, the plot takes a sideways leap and lands in an entirely different genre, which may leave you not so much intrigued as utterly bewildered.

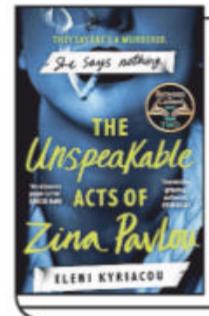


The First 48 Hours

By Simon Kernick

For something that, in the best possible way, does exactly what it says on the tin, Simon Kernick is hard to beat. This expertly crafted, hits-the-ground-

running thriller features four narrators: creepy Delvina, embalmer, dominatrix and head of a team of highly successful kidnappers known as the Vanishers; mordantly cynical police officer Keith “Fish” Fisher, of the National Crime Agency's anti kidnap unit, who is the Vanishers' man on the inside; lawyer Becca, who is representing professional hitman Logan Quinn; and her daughter Elle, who is the Vanishers' next target. They pass the narrative baton between them as the stakes get ever higher in a vivid, high-octane page-turner.

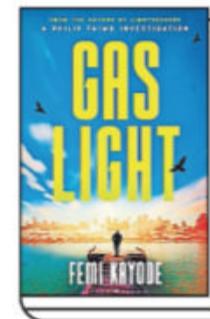


The Unspeakable Acts of Zina Pavlou

By Eleni Kyriacou

Inspired by the true story of Styllou Christofi, who, in 1954, was convicted of killing her daughter-in-law and became the penultimate woman to be executed in Britain, Kyriacou's novel explores how things can get lost in translation – not only between languages and cultures, but also between the sexes and the generations. She does a good job of capturing the interior life of Christofi's lightly fictionalised counterpart, Zina, an illiterate Cypriot peasant made harsh by poverty, cruelty and lack of agency. Interpreter Eva soon begins to feel a kinship with her recalcitrant client, and her loyalties

are divided when Zina reveals that it isn't the first time she has been accused of murder. Despite some over-reliance on coincidence, and licence with the legal process – Eva has a great deal more access to Zina than would have been permitted – this is both a complex and fascinating portrait of the immigrant experience in postwar Britain, and a tragic and compelling tale.



Gaslight

By Femi Kayode

The second novel in Kayode's Nigeria-set series featuring investigative psychologist Philip Taiwo is centred on a Lagos-based megachurch. Asked to investigate the disappearance of the wife of Bishop Jeremiah Dawodu, Taiwo discovers that “First Lady”, as she is known, was not popular with the church elders, who view her as a troublemaker. But all is not as it seems: signs of a bloody struggle inside the couple's home appear to have been staged, and the initially anonymous italicised sections of text make it clear that someone has it in for the religious leader, who may not be the upstanding man of God that he seems ... Deftly plotted, with a great sense of place, Gaslight more than lives up to the promise of its excellent predecessor.

LAURA WILSON IS AN ENGLISH CRIME WRITER

ASK
Annalisa Barbieri



I'm hurt that my sisters are going to England for a trip without me

I am a retired North American woman who is a huge anglophile. I have visited England a couple of times and always want to return. The only thing stopping me is finances. A solo trip is beyond my budget. I have two sisters living on the other side of the country and we stay in touch via a chat group. I have considered asking one or both if they'd like to visit England with me.

Recently I said something about wanting to go to England so much that I sometimes watch YouTube videos of bus trips around the country. In reply, one of the sisters told me that she is planning a trip to England for her and our other sister. My jaw dropped. There seemed to be no thought of including me in the trip. I don't want to rain on their parade, but I also feel as if I now know what they think of me.

At our age it is unlikely I will get a chance to visit England again. I am hurt and have pretty much cut off contact with them. This is possibly an immature and extreme reaction, but that's how I feel.

Were you the eldest, middle or youngest? And what was your relationship with your sisters like growing up? I wonder if this is a painful reminder of how things have always been. Have they always done things without you?

You chastise yourself by saying your reaction is immature, which hints of very young (but understandable) feelings. No one likes to be left out, but if this started in childhood, the reactions can feel very tender. I found myself wishing you'd felt able to say something at the point they mentioned England - there can be no ambiguity if you lay your cards on the table - but I understand how hard that would have been. It takes courage to admit to these feelings and face possible further rejection, but when you call people out on this type of behaviour they rarely have the courage to persist with it, because so much relies on complicit silence. A proclamation of vulnerability can actually make us very powerful.

One caveat: I am, of course, presuming you told them how much England meant to you before the chat where you mention the YouTube buses, and this wasn't the first time they'd heard of it.

I went to ACP-registered psychotherapist Alison Roy, who gave me a really interesting perspective on not just triad dynamics (what you're in) but how, generally, some people need an audience to make themselves

If you would like advice on a family matter, email ask.annalisa@theguardian.com. See theguardian.com/letters-terms-for-terms-and-conditions

feel good. We see this a lot on social media: "Look at me, my life/relationship is fabulous."

"In these situations, the third person [here, you] is playing an important useful role for the other two," said Roy, "and it might be worth remembering that although you feel left out, your sisters are probably thinking about you a lot [and they need your reaction]. Because usually when someone needs to tell someone else that they're having a good time, or their relationship is special, we might wonder how special it really is."

Roy suggested, if you felt able, saying something fairly gentle but pointed, such as: "Did you not realise how important going to England was to me?"

You want to go to England. Can I gently challenge you to look at whether you can afford it? What is it about going with your sisters that would have made it so much more accessible, given that the flights would be the same? I'm guessing accommodation, but would this be radically cheaper if you went with your sisters? Have you looked at group travel? I wonder if perhaps it was the thought of company that made this trip feel doable. I can understand that. I'm sure transatlantic readers will have some ideas about how you could make this work, and get to see London from the front of a real bus.

And don't cut off contact with your sisters; make sure to send them a postcard.

Is this a painful reminder of how things have always been?

STEPHEN COLLINS





Pantry panic: what can I do with a stash of obscure ingredients?

I was seduced by a Nigella recipe, and now have bags of rice flour, desiccated coconut and panko breadcrumbs. What can I make with them?

Bridget, Hertfordshire, England, UK

Oh, Bridget, we've all been seduced by Nigella and her recipes at some point in our lives. I'm assuming we're talking about her coconut shrimp, and if that's the case, you could apply the same principle to other fish. Fillet of cod or salmon, say, would welcome a coconut crust, says Jun Tanaka, chef-patron of The Ninth in London. "Mix the coconut and panko in a bowl. In another bowl, combine the rice flour, salt and pepper." Dip the fish in the flour, then in beaten egg and, finally, the panko mix. "Put on a tray, spray lightly with olive oil and bake until golden."

The dream, of course, would be a plethora of dishes that require all three ingredients, and Guardian Feast columnist Tamal Ray gets close enough with his pati shapta. These Bengali pancakes, made using a batter of 120g rice flour, 30g sugar and 200ml whole milk, are filled with a coconut mix (100g desiccated coconut, two cardamom pods, 300ml whole milk and 80g dark sugar simmered to a "sticky paste"), then rolled.

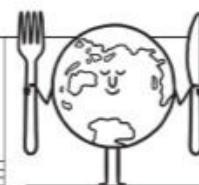
Failing that, we'll just have to tackle Bridget's ingredients individually. Panko is a prime

candidate for coating things and frying, or for turning into a salad topper. These breadcrumbs are also a decent binder for meatballs or, says Jan Ostle, head chef of Wilsons in Bristol, stuffing: "Pop a load of mushrooms in a food processor, then [add] garlic, thyme, panko and a fistful of butter." Stuff that inside a chicken and roast. Milli Taylor, head of the Ottolenghi Test Kitchen, however, turns to panko for korokke, or Japanese croquettes: "Mix whatever leftover veg you have with mashed potato, then roll in panko and fry." Top with tonkatsu sauce, and you're winning.

Although pol sambol is usually made with fresh coconut, desiccated also works, Taylor says: "Grind the [unsweetened] coconut, green chilli, chilli powder, red onion, lime, salt and tomato, then serve with any curry or dal." Alternatively, add to tikkis or, for something sweet, cookies, sheet cake and macaroons.

Finally, the rice flour, which, Taylor says, is best put to work in "battery things", her go-to being Thai sweetcorn fritters; kimchi pancakes are another good shout. Otherwise, Bridget is probably back to "rolling and frying", Ostle says, although he suspects "some will probably lurk until you fully commit and eat only Nigella's recipe until the whole bag is finished".

ANNA BERRILL IS A FOOD WRITER
Got a culinary dilemma?
Email feast@theguardian.com



THE WEEKLY RECIPE
By Felicity Cloake

Nº 245 Perfect ful medames

Prep 10 min
Soak Overnight
Cook 70 min
Serves 4-6

• VEGAN
• GLUTEN FREE

Ingredients
400g small dried fava beans, or 2 x 400g tins
1 tsp cumin seeds
2-4 garlic cloves, peeled
Salt
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 tomatoes, chopped
1 green chilli, finely chopped (optional)
1 lemon
1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley

This simple fava bean stew (pronounced "fool med-am-es") is so ubiquitous in much of the Middle East and farther afield that it's popularly known as "the rich man's breakfast, shopkeeper's lunch and pauper's supper". Loved from Ethiopia to Iraq, its locus is generally acknowledged to be Egypt, which inspires my version.

Method

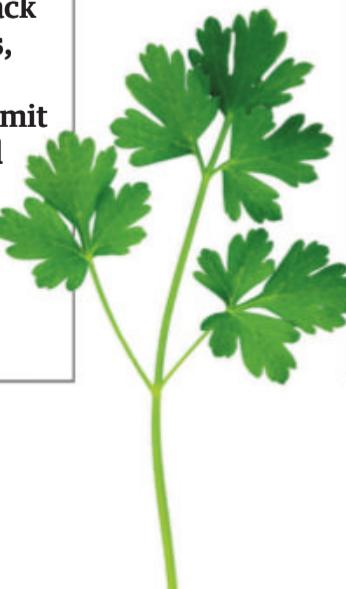
If using dried beans, soak them overnight in plenty of cold water, then drain. Put in a large pan and cover with about 3cm fresh water. Cover, bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer gently until soft - depending on the age of the beans, this should take at least an hour. Alternatively, drain the tinned beans into a large pan with about half of their liquid (reserve the rest), then heat up gently.

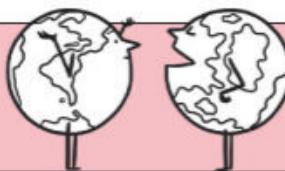
Once the beans are almost ready, toast the cumin seeds in a dry frying pan until aromatic, then tip into a mortar, add the garlic and a pinch of coarse salt and pound to a paste (or use a garlic crusher or knife).

Put the oil in the same frying pan over a medium heat, then fry the onion until softened. Add the tomatoes and chilli, if using, and fry for about five minutes, until the tomatoes have broken down.

If there's still a lot of liquid left in the beans, uncover and turn up the heat to reduce slightly; conversely, if they've dried out (especially likely if using tinned), add more of the tin liquid or water. Mash about a quarter of the beans into the sauce to thicken it, then stir in the onions, tomatoes and garlic paste, and cook gently for about 10 minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and season to taste.

Serve sprinkled with chopped flat-leaf parsley and more olive oil, with warm flatbreads, lemon wedges, salad, pickles and so on the side as desired.





Notes and Queries
The long-running series that invites readers to send in questions and answers on anything and everything

QUIZ

Thomas Eaton

- 1 In 1946, where did the monthly inflation rate reach 41.9 quadrillion per cent?
- 2 Which English county has two separate coastlines?
- 3 Before 1827, theft of more than 12 pence was defined as what?
- 4 Who is the only UK prime minister with a PhD?
- 5 Which predatory mammals were released in the Cairngorms this year?
- 6 At what football ground are sweets thrown into the crowd before matches?
- 7 Which US female lineage-based group is known as DAR?
- 8 What are the 110

PUZZLES

Chris Maslanka

1 Wordpool

Find the correct definition:

MEKOMETER
 a) device for detecting aliens
 b) precision rangefinder
 c) tunable ray-gun
 d) sunspot counter

2 E pluribus unum

Rearrange THREE PASTORS to make a single word.

Messier objects?

What links:

- 9 Locke; Player; Els; Oosthuizen?
- 10 The Cow; The Cattle; The Bee; The Ant; The Spider; The Elephant?
- 11 Photoelectric effect; Brownian motion; special relativity; mass-energy equivalence?
- 12 Dobong; Gangnam; Jung; Songpa (and 21 others)?
- 13 Harold II, 1066; William II, 1100; Richard I, 1199; future Henry V, 1403?
- 14 Catherine Parr; Anne Dacier; Constance Garnett; Anthea Bell?
- 15 Shakespearean lovers (10 and 18); dances (6 and 20); month (14); a southern African people (26)?

3 Dropouts

Replace each asterisk to make a word: *P*O*S*E*

4 Same Difference

Identify the two words which differ only in the letter shown:

B*** (it soothes)
 C*** (soothed)

5 Enigma

Which weighs more: the full moon or the new moon?

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CINEMA CONNECT

Killian Fox

Name the films and the rock group that connects them.



Answers Quiz 1 Hungary 2 Devon.
 3 Grand larceny 4 Gorodion Brown.
 5 Wildcats 6 Goodison Park (Everton FC).
 7 Daughters of the American Revolution.
 8 Astronomical objects (catalogued by Charles Messier) 9 South African 10 Suras who won the Open Championship. 11 Subjects of Einstein's theory "annus mirabilis" papers in 1905. 12 Districts of Seoul. 13 Kings killed in Harold's case. 14 Debated in Parliament; Latin injuryed by arrows (debated in Harold's case). 15 Native poetry; Russian literature; Psalms; Greek poetry; Latin literature; Asteix. 16 Celestial alphabet; Latin letters and Romano; Foster and Tangos; Juliet and Romeo; Foster and Tangos; November; Zulu.

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CHESS

Leonard Barden

England were in fifth place going into last Thursday's rest day after five of the nine rounds of the 36-nation European team championship in Budva, Montenegro. They were unbeaten, with three wins and two draws, and they were just a single match point behind the leaders, Germany. However, they were due to face a difficult task in last weekend's closing rounds.

Favourable pairings meant England avoided playing any of the other seven teams in the leading group in the early rounds.

Germany, who took the lead by beating Armenia 3-1, owed it to their top board. Vincent Keymer celebrated his 19th birthday in memorable style by defeating Haik Martirosyan in an ending where he started a pawn down. The victory also

3894 Irina Bulmaga v Konstantin Andreev, Forni di Sopra 2023. White to move and win.



advanced Keymer into the world top 20, with India's Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa the only teenager ahead of him.

England women had fluctuating results, but advanced to 13th place via a 4-0 fifth-round rout of North Macedonia. Lan Yao, 22, the British women's champion, again performed well with 3/4, although that included a dramatic win against Israel where she was losing for most of the game before her last-ditch counterattack led to checkmate.

3894 1 Rxg5! hxg5 2 Nf4! gxft4 3 Qxg6+! Kf8 (Rxg6 4 Rd8+ mates) 4 Qf5+! Kg8 5 Rd7 wins.

COUNTRY DIARYDUNBLANE
Perthshire, Scotland, UK

ew soles trample this upper glen and the dwindling track as it skirts the Wharry Burn's gorge. Those that do are rewarded with a ravine of surprising drama. At the head of the chasm, where fallen trees and gravel bars accumulate, the burn is placid. But here, at the lip of the first cascade, the water squeezes between two sandstone boulders, accelerating into a white flume, hissing with second thoughts.

I leap the gap between the boulders, to where the only trails belong to the deer; to where the only prints are cloven. They trace secretive routes, brushing through bracken fronds and around the silent trunks of the broadleaved woodland - beech, elm, ash and birch.

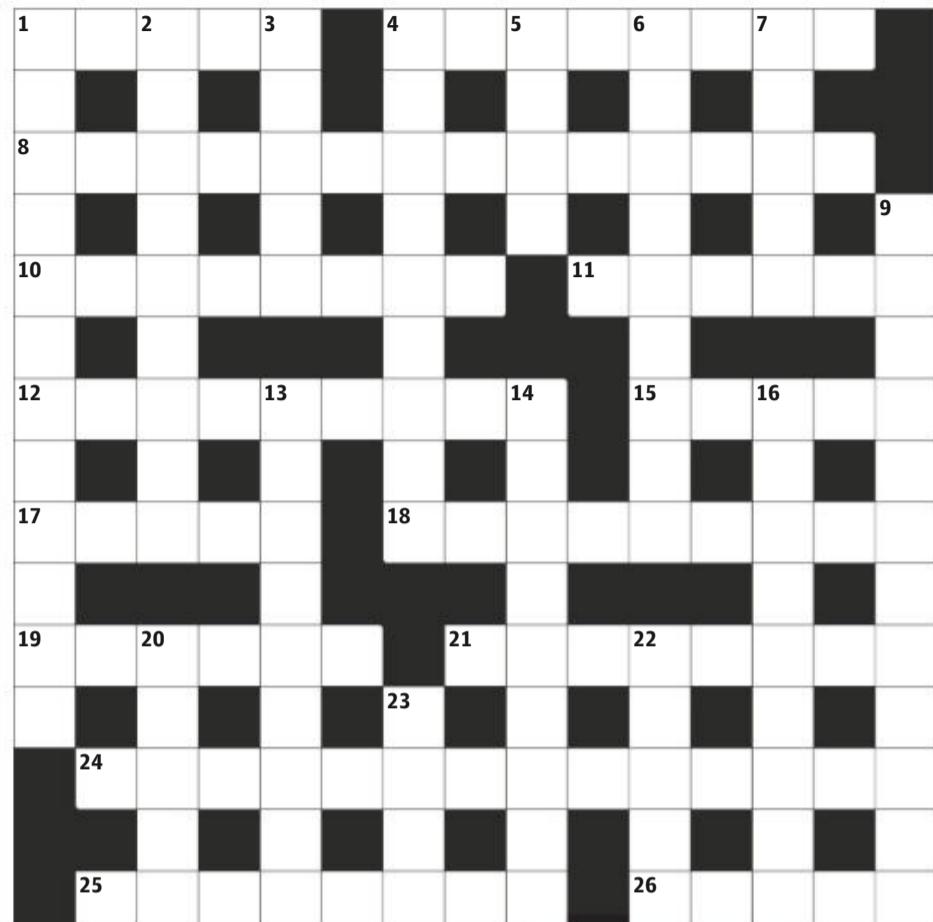
One veteran beech spreads its aged and weighty branches like an upturned hand, wearing a ragged glove of deep green moss. Straight-trunked younger trees keep a respectful distance. Occasional leaves tumble down to join the multitude that carpet the ground. The gold, copper and bronze delights my colour-hungry eyes. It is a privilege to find peace in nature this autumn.

By now the river is deep below and known only to the ear as it boils and rushes. A glimpse can be stolen from behind fearless trees at the craggy edge; the roots of the bravest grip tightly at the brink. The white falls, racing flumes and black pools churn away in the secret depths. The chasm protects the riverbed from wandering hooves and boots, and the burn flows on undisturbed.

If there were a wild place that a fading soul might yearn to visit just one last time, it might be a place of splendour such as this; to listen to the river, to hear the birds pipe out lullabies and to watch the lowering of the November sun. Francis Hayes

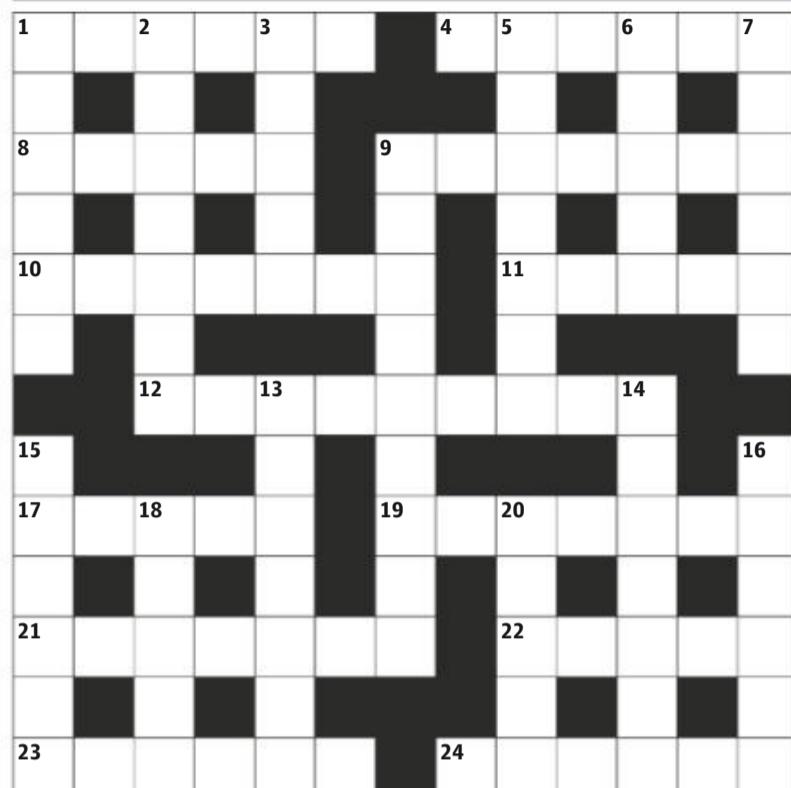


ILLUSTRATION: CLIFFORD HARPER



All solutions published next week
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Quick crossword No 16,700



The Weekly cryptic No 29,227



By Tramp

Across

- Like lightning strike: power cuts (5)
- Brilliant person standing to perform (5,3)
- Deals in these clubs: Chelsea missing Abramovich, ultimately in arrangement with Arsenal (9,5)
- Nonsense to members? Conservative backtracking (8)
- Check mirror: learner driver in place to practise religiously? (6)
- The Lion after game: weak spot in order (4,2,3)
- Pull to get sex, specifically? (2,3)
- Checked out patient before doctor's introduction (5)
- Awareness of time, I must go in (9)
- Crazy state of uniform: note frilly edging (6)
- Weight on American, mostly comfort eating? It goes up and down (8)
- Surgical procedure: model figure receiving it for partner? (8,6)
- Learning timetable as friend's coming back by coach (8)
- Mythological creature, Erinyes, primarily, following couple of Greek characters (5)

Down

- More costly dental procedure to cover cap of tooth: measure for changing plates (7,5)
- They introduce prince and Epstein, originally during walks (9)
- Liverpool fan upset? Not after their match with Everton? (5)
- Cuddles lots after stripping bare (9)
- Cuts lines on graphs (4)
- Food put out past eight (9)
- Man acquiring ecstasy that's easily obtained (5)

- Three schools needing repair to get drier (7,5)
- Getting on train that's traditional (3,6)
- Wife and a new catch make out on return: they dream of a new life (9)
- Opening present and flowers in this? (6,3)
- Sleep with unoccupied playboy like Terry? (5)
- He's not entirely honest, supported by Mike Pence? (5)
- Shoot up, wanting cocaine in arm? (4)

Solution No 29,221



Across

- Countenance (6)
- Sculpture (6)
- Queen, king and ace, say (5)
- Improvising music (7)
- Perspective (7)
- Financial backer (5)
- Garment worn as penance (4,5)
- Roof edges (5)
- Pose questions (7)
- Thorough (2-5)
- Distribute (5)
- Ticks off (6)
- Motionless (6)

- Overwhelm (6)
- Gag writer (9)
- Dull or flavourless (7)
- Child with two siblings all the same age (7)
- Neglectful (6)
- Frantically busy (6)
- Recording on tape (5)
- Two pints (5)

Solution No 16,694



Down

- Champion (6)
- Elongate - prison time (7)
- Relish (5)
- Kettledrums - I'm inapt (anag.) (7)
- Fastening (with string) (5)

Sudoku Easy

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Last week's solution

1	9	3	6	2	8	4	5	7
5	7	2	3	9	4	6	8	1
6	8	4	1	5	7	9	2	3
4	5	8	7	6	3	2	1	9
2	1	7	4	8	9	5	3	6
9	3	6	5	1	2	8	7	4
8	4	9	2	3	1	7	6	5
3	2	5	9	7	6	1	4	8
7	6	1	8	4	5	3	9	2

7			4	3				
3			9	7				
4			1	3	2	5		
			4	7	8	6		
			6	2	1	4		
			6	3	9			
			1	8				
9			8					
			3			2	8	1

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